

How. Harris 1461

Christian Thoughts

For every Day of the

MONTH.

Together with

MEDITATIONS

Upon the most

Important TRUTHS

OF THE

GOSPEL.

And Prayers for every Morning and Evening.

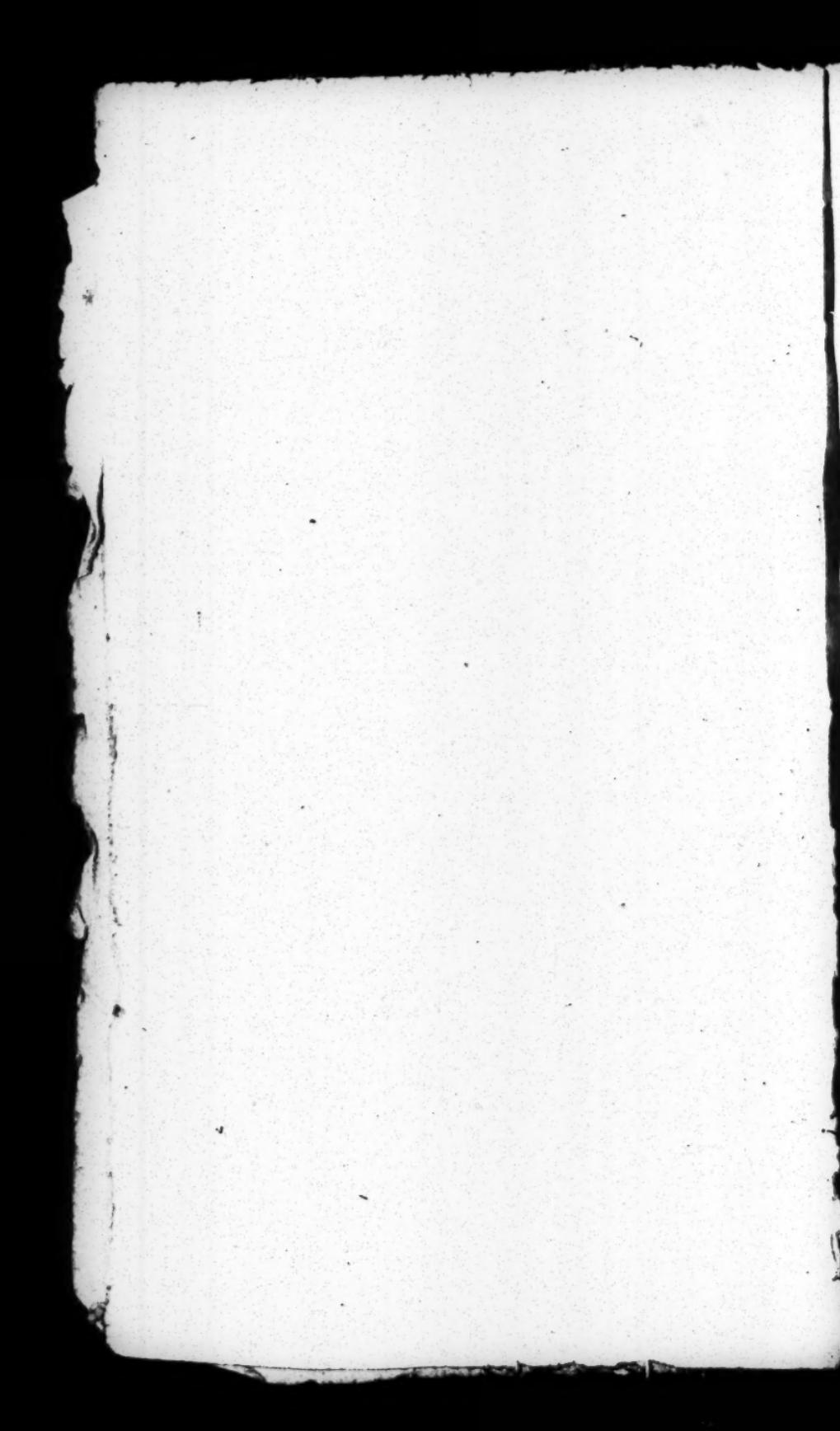
By a Divine of the Ch. of England.

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L O N D O N,

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THE
Author's Advertisement
TO THE
READER.

These are not Discourses which require either much Application or Time in the Reader; they are single Thoughts, merely moral, which have for their Object not only natural Honesty, like those of Epictetus and Seneca; but they are Christian Thoughts, which have for their end the most Important Truths of Faith, and the most sublime Maxims of the Gospel.

These

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These Thoughts are not only proper for those who live retired, and whose Business is Devotion, but likewise for those who are engaged in Affairs of the World, and have little or no acquaintance with God ; for certainly they who are most employed in worldly Concerns, may sometimes find a Moment to cast up their Eyes to Heaven ; and though their Affairs are so urgent, as not to allow them regular Meditations, yet they may at least once a day entertain a religious Thought before they enter upon their worldly Business. The design of this little Book is to furnish you with Meditations for every Day of the Month ; To make good use of them, you must observe the following Method.

In

to the Reader.

In the Morning as soon as you have prayed to God, and begg'd his Protection, read the Thoughts for that Day; but read them leisurely, that you may througħly comprehend them. If you have time enough, consider well the first Article before you proceed to the second, and be not satisfied with understanding the Truths or Maxims that you have read; enter into them, digest them; make right Application of them; and so the like in every other Article: If you have too much Business, content your self with a single reading. Christian Thoughts make the same Impression on the Mind, that a Seal does on Wax; though they enter never so little into it, yet they are sure to

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to leave some Mark behind. If you have no leisure in the Morning to read these Thoughts, nor any other time of the Day, yet read them at Night before you go to bed.

The Practice which immediately follows the Thoughts for the day, is both important and easie, and must by no means be omitted.. An Act of Virtue, and one short Reflection, are soon performed.

The Quotations at the end of the Chapters, are a Compendium of the Day's Meditation, in which is contained the force and substance of it. They are skort and easie to be learned by Heart ; they are touching and sufficient both to excite, sustain, and nourish the Soul for that Day. They are Grains
of

to the Reader.

of Essence which contain many Virtues in a little room, and work great Effects in a little time.

When, by this Method of a Chapter every Day, you have gone through the whole, begin and read them again, that you may be sure to understand them perfectly, and reap the necessary benefit.

There is always something to discover in the Truths of the Gospel, they are inexhaustible Mines ; they are likewise such Seeds as will produce no Fruit, unless they be deeply rooted in our Hearts.

TO

TO THE Ingenious Translator.

TO imitate this Authors pions flame,
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Proceed till the whole Treasure we possess.
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Christian

Christian Thoughts

For every Day of the

MONTH.

The first Day.

Of Faith.

I. **W**HATSOEVER the Gospel teacheth us, is grounded upon the Authority of Gods Word ; that which is there proposed to us for the Object of our Belief, was received from Christ himself. It is impossible to err, when we have Truth it self for our Guide. There is nothing more reasonable than that submitting our Reason to Faith.

II. To what end has a Christian Faith, if he makes not use of it, as a Rule to his Actions ? It is a great madness to doubt

The First Day.

the Truth of that Doctrine which God has reveal'd, which so many *Martyrs* have signed with their Blood, which has been confirmed by so many Miracles, and which the Devils themselves have been forc'd to acknowledge. But it is yet a far greater madness to believe this Doctrine, and live as one doubted the verity of it; for it is to believe as the Devils do, not to lead a Life conformable to our Faith.

III. Faith, then for the future, shall be the ground of my Actions, and Rule of my Life; that which she disapproves, I will absolutely condemn, notwithstanding all the Struglings of Nature. I will make use of the Maxims of the Gospel against those of the World. What says the World? It says, We ought to follow our own Inclinations, and suffer nothing. What says Jesus Christ? quite the contrary. Who is in the right of it, Christ or the World?

Here thank God that you are born a Member of the true Church. Say the Creed slowly, as if you were making a solemn Profession of your Faith.

The Second Day.

3

Adauge nobis fidem, Luke, Chap. 17.

Lord encrease our Faith.

*Quid prodest, si quis catholice credat,
Et gentiliter vivat?* Pet. Dam.

What avails it to believe like a Christian,
and live like a Heathen.

The Second Day.

Of the End of Man.

I. **G**O D alone is our last End; he could not create us, but for himself. Our Heart tells us, We are made only for God, and we cannot think otherwise, without betraying our selves, and giving our Hearts the Lye.

II. Every one ought to have his own. Let us then yield our selves up to God, since we belong to him. If we submit not our selves willingly to him, as his Children, we shall be compelled to do it, as his Slaves. It is necessary for us to live under the Government, either of his Mercy or Justice; which side will you chuse?

III. Every thing should tend to its Center, and Act according to its Nature.

The Second Day.

If the Sun which was made to give us Light, should withhold his Beams, it would be as if it were not at all, or rather it would seem a Monster in the World; so there is nothing more unprofitable or monstrous, than a Heart that was made only for God, not to be only his. Do I carry my self like a Creature that is only made for God? My Thoughts and Actions, are they all for him? Alas, how few things do we, which we can truly say are for God's Service! What do we on Earth, if we neglect the only thing for which we are sent into the World?

Take here a firm Resolution to seek only after God, and to rob him of nothing that appertains to him.

Dominus meus & Deus meus.

My Lord, and my God. John 20.

Totum te exigit, qui totum te fecit. St. August.

He that has made you what you are may justly require of you to be only his.

The Third Day.

Of Contempt of the World.

I. **N**O sooner does a Man fix his Heart on the World, but he ceases in some manner, to be a Christian. This prophanè World is so enamour'd with Greatness, with Pleasure, and whatever else sooths its sensual Inclinations, that it thereby becomes the capital Enemy of Jesus Christ: Their Maxims, their Commands, and their Interests, are contrary to each other. We cannot serve two Masters, we must break with the one or the other.

II. We cannot take the worldly part without violating the Promises of our Baptism, wherein we are engag'd by a solemn Oath to forsake the Devil and all his Works, to trample under feet all the Pomp and Vanities of this wicked World. What Perfidiousness, what Sacrilege, after all this, to become an Idolater of Vanity, and to prefer the Goods of the Earth, before those of Heaven?

III. The World has nothing worth the Love of an immortal Soul.

It has not wherewith to recompense its Followers ; its Treasures, its Divertisements, its Honour may for some time amuse a Man's Heart, but they can never satisfie it. They are (to speak truly) but false Good's, Illusion, and meer Shadows : or rather, they are true Evils : They make a Man wicked, without making him happy.

The most dazzling Fortune is not only vain and frail, but burthensom, abounding with Bitternes and Chagrin ; we sigh and complain. The King on his Throne has his Sufferings, as well as the Slave in his Irons.

Beseech God to destroy in you the Spirit of the World, and enable you to despise its Greatness.

Præterit figura hujus mundi.

The World passes away, and the Figure thereof, *1 Cor. 7.*

Væ his qui hæserint transiuntibus, quoniam simul transiunt.

They are happy who fix their Minds on transient things, because they themselves pass away together with them.

The fourth Day.

Of Death.

I. **A** Christian hath great reason to fear Death, when he lives not like a Christian. What Reckoning is to come after a worldly and sensual Life? what Regret for having lost the opportunities of our Salvation? To die the Enemy of God? O the sad Death! O the deplorable Moment which is to end the pleasures of this Life, and to begin the Pains of Eternity!

II. What shall we not wish to have done at the Hour of Death? Let us do now, what we shall then desire to have done; there is no Time to lose. Every Moment may be our last; the longer we live, the nearer we are to the Grave: Our Death is so much the nearer, the longer it has been deferr'd.

III. What Thoughts shall we have of the Goods of the Earth, when we are to leave them? Let us now take Counsel of Death, he is faithful, and will not deceive us. What will become of this Wealth, this Pleasure, this Beauty? How will they be esteemed by the Dying?

8 The Fourth Day.

During our Life, we are cheated with Appearances ; but at Death we see all things as they are. The living Man values the World, but the dying despises it ; which of the two ought we to believe ? Oh, how little will the World appear by the glimmering of the Taper that lites us to our Death-bed ? But then, alas, it will be too late to be undeceiv'd.

Think of that which we would most fear, if you were presently to die : And set all things in order thereunto. Accustom your self to the Duty of each Day, as if it were to be your last ; and confirm your self in this Practice by frequent receiving of the Holy Communion.

*Uno tantum gradu ego morsque dividimur.
I am within one step of Death, 1 King.
Christiano crastinum non est. Tertul.
There is no to morrow for a Christian.*

The Fifth Day. Of the Last Judgment.

I. WE must one Day appear before the Tribunal of Jesus Christ, to receive Judgment according to the Good

The fifth Day.

Good or Ill that we have done. There is nothing more express, or fully set down in the Scriptures than this Truth. I believe it as firmly, as if the last Trumpet were now sounding to awaken all the Dead.

II. What shall we say when we find so many evil Thoughts, so many guilty Actions, and so many neglected Opportunities of Grace, rise in Judgment against us.

III. O the terrible Day, the Day of God's Wrath, when all things shall be laid open, even to the inmost Motions of our Hearts ; when every thing shall be strickly reckoned for, even to a Moment, and nothing abated ! The Just shall scarcely be quitted, where then shall the wicked and ungodly appear ?

IV. What Sentence is an Impenitent Sinner to expect from an Inexorable God ? O the dreadful Decree of, Go you Cursed, &c ! Ah, Lord where shall those VVretches go, who lie under your Curse ? Into what Corner of the VWorld will you have them retire, who must part from you ? where can that Habitation be ? to be banished from the presence of God, and to be cursed by him ; what a Por-
tion is that ?

Imagine your self to be before the Tribunal of God; of what Sin is it that you would be most ashamed? Think of it in time, and remember that the most secret Sins will be made publick at the Day of Judgment, unless they are before washed away by Repentance.

Ante faciem indignationis ejas quis stabit? Nah. i.

Who can stand before his Indignation?
Væ etiam laudabili vita hominum, si remota misericordia discutias eam. St. Aug.

Wo to the most regular and blameless Life, if thou, O Lord, examine it without Mercy.

The Sixth Day.

Of Hell.

I. **W**HAT Horror should we have of Hell, if we could but hear the lamentable cries of the Damn'd. They sigh, they groan, they howl like wild Beasts in the midst of the Flames. They reproach one another with their Sins; they lament them, they detest them, but all too late. Their Tears serve only to encrease

encrease the Fire that burns them, without consuming. O Repentance of the Damn'd, how rigorous art thou to no purpose !

II. Never to see God, nor be where he is ; to burn eternally in that Fire, of which ours is but a Shadow ; to suffer all sorts of Misery, without Relief or Intermission ; to have always the Devil before our Eyes, Rage and Despair continually in our Hearts ; O what a Life is this !

III. These Wretches rage to think of the many Opportunities they have had of Salvation, and how they have neglected them all. The Remembrance of their past Pleasures, is one of their most sensible Torments ; but nothing so much afflicts them, as not to be able to forget that God, whom they have lost by their own Fault.

Fancy your self to be in Hell: ask the damn'd what brought them thither; interrogate them of the Estate in which they are, and learn of them to fear God, and see your own Danger.
Quis de vobis habitare poterit cum igne devorante?

Who

12 The Seventh Day.

Who can dwell with everlasting Fire?

Isaiah 33.

De pænâ in pænam transeunt, de ardore cupiditatis in ardorem Gehennæ. St. August.

The wicked pass from one Torment to another, from the Flames of Lust into those of Hell.

The Seventh Day.

Of the Eternity of Hell's Torments.

I. CAN the Wrath of God go further than to punish the Pleasures that endure so little with Torments that never end? To be wretched as long as God shall be God; what misfortune is that? Is it not enough, that the Pains of the Damn'd should be extream? Must they be everlasting? The prick of a Pin, which is but a light hurt, were it always to continue, would become insupportable; what then shall it be, &c?

II. O Eternity! When a Damn'd Person shall have shed as many Tears as are sufficient to make up all the Rivers and Seas in the World, he would be never the nearer after so many Millions of years.

years than if he did but just begin to suffer. He must begin anew ; and when he has begun and begun as often as there are Grains of Sand on the Sea-shore, or Atoms in the Air, and leaves in the Forests, all this shall be accounted for nothing.

III. The Damn'd have not only an Eternity to suffer, but they suffer that whole Eternity in every Moment. Eternity is always before them ; Eternity enters into all their Pains, they have always in their Mind, that those Pains will never end. O the cruel Thoughts ! O the deplorable Estate ! an Eternity to burn, an Eternity to weep, an Eternity to rage. O did we but conceive of this as the damned do !

Make it part of your Creed, the duration of Pains, with which the Divine Justice punisheth Sin. We must believe it, tho' we yet conceive it. It is a great Misfortune for a Christian not to be convinced of the reality of Eternal Torments, but by his own Experience.

*Qui non obedient Evangelio precius dabitur
in interitu sempiternas.*

Taking

The Eighth Day

Taking Vengeance on them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, 2 Thess. 1.

Momentaneum est quod delectat, æternum quod cruciat, St. Chrysost.

The Pleasures of Sin is for a Moment, the Punishment Eternal.

The Eighth Day.

Of Paradise.

I. **P**aradise, O the great Word ! who names Paradise, names the Privation of all Evil, the Assemblance of all that is Good, the Master-piece of God's Magnificence, the Price of Christ's Blood, the fulfilling of our Hearts Defires, and somewhat more than all this.

II. To see God in the full Splendor of his Glory, to love him beyond all measure, to possess him without Fear of ever-losing him, to participate of his Happiness : This, this is the Object of our Hopes. Ah ! I have but a few Days of Exile and Pilgrimage on Earth ; after which I shall be for ever with him, whom my Soul loves.

III. What

III. What matters it how, or what we are here, so we may be eternally with Christ hereafter? Can I justly complain that an infinite Bliss costs me a little Trouble? The Martyrs bought Heaven with the Price of their Blood; yet after all, they thought it was given them for nothing. O Blessed Eternity, if Men did but know thy true Value!

*Exite in your self an ardent Desire to see
God, and look upon the Earth with Con-
tempt, in respect of Heaven. If you were
once posseſt with a true Knowledge of
Paradise, you would neither admire.
nor fear any thing in this World.*

Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua, Ps. 16.
I shall be satisfied with the fulness of thy Glory.

Si labor terret, merces invitet, St. Bern.
If the Duty terrifies us, the Reward ought to encourage us.

The Ninth Day.

Of God's Presence.

I. GOD considers me as if I were alone in the VVorld, or rather, he is in me like an All-seeing Eye, from which nothing can be hid; he views me after the same manner that he surveys himself, and so intensely, as if he ceased from contemplating his own Essence, to study me, and know me to the bottom.

II. It is a thousand times more disgraceful for me to have my Sins known to God, than if they were exposed to the view of the whole VVorld. VWould you do that before the meanest of your Servants, which you presume daily to commit in the presence of the King of Kings? what blindness, what Folly is it to fear so much the Eyes of the VVorld, and so little those of God?

III. All the darkness of Night is not thick enough to hide us from him that is Light its self. The most retired and solitary places are full of his Divine Majesty. In vain we shun the sight of Men, since we every where meet with that of God.

Place

The Tenth Day. 17

Place your self with Reverence before God, and see if there be any thing in you that is displeasing in him. Accustom your self to the Practice of his Presence, for it is a sure and effectual Remedy against sin. If we do but consider that God sees us, it is sufficient to check in us our sinful Desires.

Omnia nuda & aperta sunt oculis ejus.
All things are naked and open to his sight, *Heb. 4.*

Si peccare vis, quære ubi non te videat Deus, & fac quod vis, *S. Aug.*

If you must needs commit Sin, find some Place where God cannot see you, and do what you will.

The Tenth Day.

Of the Care of our Salvation.

I. **S**Alvation is Man's chiefest Busines, all the rest ought to be looked upon as nothing.

The Undertakings of Princes, the Intrigues of Courts; Wars, Negotiations, &c. are but as so many Amusements and

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and Toys for Children ; our most important and only Affair is to serve God, and save our Souls. In this consists Man's chiefest Good, his Perfection and Happiness. It is more Irrational than Man-like, to neglect a Concern of so great Consequence, whose Success is uncertain and Loss irreparable. What Blindness and Folly is it to be thoughtful how to live, and take care how to live well ? to be so solicitous to make our Fortune, and so careless of our Salvation ? *What does it profit a Man to gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?*

II. All Creatures were created for our Salvation, and they become unprofitable when they are not made use of to that end ; so that when a Man ceaseth to work out his Salvation, the Sun ought to refuse him his Light, and the Heavens to stand still, the Earth to deny him her Fruits, and the Angels their Protection ; or rather, he ought to return into nothing, for he is unworthy of Life, when he lives not for God.

III. Nevertheless the greatest part of Mankind think of nothing so little as the saving their Souls ; great care is taken of every thing but Salvation ? We would

The Tenth Day. 19

would have all things else turn to account : Our Money must be put out to Interests; our Fields Plowed, and our Rents raised ; we lament all Losses, but that which is irreparable: VVe spend much on our Bodies, and nothing on our Souls. By our manner of Life, we would think our Souls were no part of us, or that they did belong to our greatest Enemies, or were no more than Souls of Beasts ; or it rather seems that we have none at all : Or if we have, to no other purpose, but to lose them.

Make a firm Resolution to save your self at any price, and be of St. Bennet's mind, who, being asked by a King an unjust Request, said, If I had two Souls, I would give one for this price ; but having but one I will not lose it.

Perro unum necessarium.

There is one thing necessary, Luke 10.
Ubi salutis damnum est, illic utique jam lucrum nullum est, St. Eucher.

VWhere a Soul is lost, there can be no Gain.

The

The Eleventh Day.

Of the Horrour of Sin.

I. **O**Vhat a Loss is the Loss of God ! Men think themselves unhappy, when they lose an Estate by a Sute at Law, by a Bankrupt Person, or any other Accident ; what is then the Loss of an infinite God ? Miserable is that Soul, which loseth God for a Sin ; but more miserable is that Soul, who counts the Loss of God as nothing.

II. O Sin ! How common art thou amongst Men, and yet how little known to them ? By Gaming and other Divertisements, to become the Objects of God's VVrath, what Profit, what Diversification is that ? God who is all Love, hates infinitely a Sinner. To hate a little, is to wish a little ill : To hate to Death, is to desire ones Death ; but to hate infinitely, is not to be comprehended. VVhat can we then be afraid of, if we apprehend not this dreadful Hatred of God Almighty ?

III. Is there so dreadful a Spectacle as that of Mount Calvary ? Yet the Stan-

The Eleventh Day

21

of a Soul deprived of Grace, is much more terrible than that of God's dying on the Cross. Christ Died to destroy Sin; Sin was to him more horrible than Death.

Conceive a true Sorrow for your sins. We are to lament no Loss, but that of Grace; because that only can be repay'd by our Tears.

Quem fructum habuistis in illis in quibus nunc erubescitis? Rom. 6.

VVhat Fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed?

Væ animæ audaci, quæ speravit, si à te recesserit, te aliquid melius habituram!

St. Aug.

Wo to that audacious Soul, which departing from God, hopes to find anything better.

The Twelfth Day.

Of Repentance.

I. **R**epent and believe the Gospel, says our Saviour. He joyns these two things together on purpose to learn us that

The Twelfth Day.

that the Rigors of Repentance are inseparable from the Profession of Christianity. He was, during the Course of his mortal Life, a penitent God, altogether employ'd in expiating our Sins, and appeasing the Justice of his Father ; we ought after his Example to be penitent Men. If the Saint of Saints have fasted, wept, &c. what ought not Criminals and wicked Men to do ?

II. Sin must of necessity be punished either by him who has committed it, or by him against whom it was committed. If Sinners do not in due time chastise themselves, the Divine Justice will chastise them Eternally. These Crimes which are not washed away with Tears of Repentance, shall be punished with the Flames of Hell. Is it not better to weep for some Days, than to burn everlastinglly ?

III. Is it not sufficient for our Reconciliation to God, to prostrate our selves at the Feet of the Priests, to cover our Heads with Ashes, and our Bodies with Sackloath ? If you have not a true sense of your Sins, if you renounce not with all your Heart your disordinate Affections, unjust Gains, &c. You are an Imposter

poster, and no Penitent. Prayers Charity, Sufferings, and the mortifying our Flesh, are but the out-sides of a Christian Repentance : The hatred of Sin is Essence and Spirit of it.

Ask Pardon of God for having hitherto led a Life so opposit to the Rule of the Gospel, and at the same time beg Grace of him to live for the Future as the Primitive Christians did, in the austere Practices of Repentance.

Nisi pænitentiam egeritis, omnes similiter peribitis, Luke 13.

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Pænitentibus dico; quid prodest, quia humiliamini, nisi non mutemini ? St. August. I speak to the Penitent ; what avails it that you are humbled , if you are not changed ?

The Thirteenth Day.

Of not deferring our Conversion.

I. **I** Am not long in giving up my self to God, it looks as if I had a desire to get out of his Hands, Is there then any harm in belonging to him ? Is it a Shame to forsake a shameful Life ? Can we love too soon a Beauty infinitely amiable ? To morrow, to morrow ; why not to Day ? Why not immediatly ? To morrow, will my Bonds be easier to be broken ? Will my Heart be less hard ? No certainly : Time, which wakens all things, strengthens evil Customs. By deferring Remedies, we render our Diseases incurable.

II. What is it that hinders us from following the Voice that call us to Répentance ? What is it that frightens us ? It is difficult to change an old course of Life : I agree to it. But what ought not a Christian to do, who adores a crucified God, and hopes for Paradise ? If there be any thing that we ought to fear, it is the Abuse we make of God's Grace.

III. What ?

III. What ! do we defer ? Is the time to come in our Power ? Are we Masters of it ? Does God expect me ? It is true, the Scripture says so, but tells me not how long I have yet to live. He that has promised a Pardon to those that repent, has promised them no To-morrow to repent in. Perhaps I shall have time, but perhaps I shall have none at all. Is he not certainly a Madman, who grounds his Salvation upon a *Perhaps.*

Reflect on the time you have already spent without giving your self up to God, and tremble at the danger you are in.

Dixi, nunc cœpi, Psal. 119.

I have sworn, and I will perform it.
that I will keep thy righteous Judgments.

Nulla satis magna securitas, ubi periclitatur æternitas, St. Greg.

We cannot be secure, whilst we are uncertain of Eternity.

The

C

The Fourteenth Day.

Of the Censures of the World.

I. THE World talks, let it talk on ; shall the Discourses of Fools hinder you from being Wise ? But what will they say ? That you fear God more than Man. The greatest Libertines will in their Hearts have a value for you, and say to themselves that you are in the Right. What matters it after all, what, is said of you, so you do your Duty and God is satisfied ?

II. What Baseness is it to be ashamed of the Gospel ? Man thinks himself honoured to wear the Livery of his Prince, and yet he is ashamed to wear that of Jesus Christ. The meanest Artisans in the World make an open Profession of their Trade , and Christians in the Church dare not appear as Christians. He that denies Jesus Christ here on Earth, him will the Son of God disown before his Father in Heaven.

III. Ah ! Is there any thing in Jesus, of which we are ashamed ? His Name, is it infamous ? Is it a disgrace to follow his

The Fourteenth Day. 27

his Precepts and Examples? You are not ashamed of being Obscene and Blasphemous; you take Glory in it, and yet you are ashamed to be a good Man. Nevertheless, whatsoever the Opinion of the World be, he is certainly the best Man, who serves God the most faithfully, and makes it his Profession so to do.

Ask your self, if the Opinion of the World does not influence your Actions, and hinder you from discharging those Obligations which Christianity lays on you.

Non erubesco Evangelium, Rom. 1.

I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

Quid times fronti tuae, quam signo crucis armasti, St. Aug.

He ought to fear nothing, who carries the sign of the Cross on his Forehead.

The Fifteenth Day.

Of Distrust in ourselves.

MAN has nothing to fear so much as himself: He ought to be more apprehensive of his own weakness,

than of all the Powers of Hell. A resolute Word, a penitent Sigh, or a disdainful Look, are sufficient to vanquish them. Adam finned, Solomon forgot God, St. Peter denied Jesus Christ; what will become of us poor Rebels, if the least Wind overthrows the Cedars?

II. Man is for the most part overcome without being attacked. Our Passions and Senses conspire against us every Moment. Those who had withstood the severest Persecutions, who had conquered the power of Tyrants and Enchantments of the Devils, fell by their own Lust in the Desart. Beware of your Appetites which seem subdued and quiet left like a tamed Lion, they return to their native fiercenes.

III. The greatest Saints trembled when they thought on the State of their Souls before God. *Anchorites* and *Penitents* have been heard to sigh at the Hour of Death, in apprehension of the formidable Decrees of the Divine Justice, not knowing how their Condition stood or what would become of them: There needs but one Moment to make a *Reprobate* of a Saint.

The Sixteenth Day. 29.

Say with Philip Neri, Lord watch over me daily, for I shall betray you, if you leave me to my self. Foresee the occasions that leads to Sin, and remember that those are the most dangerous, from which we think there is nothing to be fear'd.

Qui se existimat stare, videat ne cadat;
I Cor. 10.

Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

Quamvis sis in tuto, noli esse securus, St. Bern.

Though you seem to be in safety, yet presume not to be too secure.

The Sixteenth Day.

Of the use of Grace.

WE have not the least Grace, but what Christ purchased for us at the price of his Blood, and begg'd of his Father when he yielded up his Soul on the Cross. To neglect a good Thought, which descends to us from Heaven, to stifle an Inspiration, which conducts us to our Good, is to trample

under our Feet the Blood of Jesus, and to render the Merits of his Death unprofitable.

II. We are accountable to God, not only for the Graces we have received, but for those he intended us, if we ourselves had not obstructed them. If the Sun shines, and we shut it out, yet we are not less oblig'd to him for his Light, since it was in our power to have made use of it.

III. It is now perhaps full Twenty years and more, that God has inspired you with good Thoughts, which you have not yet had Resolutions to put in practice. To be so long in the School of the Holy Ghost, and to learn nothing! To be so often solicited, entreated, nay, at last threaten'd, without performing any thing! Ah! Let us remember that God is a Creditor, with whom there is no compounding; and if he does not oblige us to immediate Payment, he will at the long run require the whole with large Interest; and that in fine he allows us but a certain time for Grace and Sin, after which he withdraws his Grace, and punisheth the Sinner,

The Seventeenth Day. 31

Give thanks to the Holy Ghost for all the Graces he has bestowed upon you, and ask pardon for not having made use of them. Hearken to what he now suggests to you, and be afraid, lest by a speedy Compliance to his Commands, he does not utterly forsake you.

Cui multum datum est, multum queretur ab eo, Luc. 12.

Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.

Gratiam sequitur judicium, St. Basil.

When Grace is despis'd, Judgment must follow.

The Seventeenth Day.

Of the Use of Time.

I. THE Loss of Time is one of the greatest Irregularities in the World; our Life is so short, that every Moment of it is precious; yet we live as if there were no end to this Life, or as if we had nothing to do in it.

II. Ah! If a damn'd Soul had but one Minute of the Time that we lose, what

32 The Seventeenth Day.

use would he make of it ? In every Moment of my Life, it is in my Power to gain a happy Eternity. We let slip no occasion of Pleasure or Profit, and yet we hourly lose the Opportunities of our Salvation.

III. That Day is not the better employed in which we have most advanc'd our worldly Affairs, but that wherein we have most improved the Grace of God, and pleas'd him most. Order so your Actions, that whenever you are asked what you are about, you may truly answer, I am doing the Service of God, and working out my own Salvation.

Renew your Resolutions to serve God, and take it for granted, that all the time you employ not in his Service, is utterly lost.

Nemini dedit spatium peccandi, Eccl. 15.
He hath commanded no Man to do wickedly, neither hath he given any Man Licence to Sin.

Vacat tibi ut Philosophus sis, non vacat ut Christianus sis, St. Panha.

You may be a Philosopher at leisure, but not a Christian.

The

The Eighteenth Day.

The Use of the Sacraments.

I. **T**H E Sacraments are the Channels by which the Blood and Merits of Christ are conveyed to us: They are the Fountains of Grace, most necessary to Salvation. When we make ill use of them, we render the Merits of Christ unprofitable, and our Salvation impossible.

II. Our approaching the Holy Table, without due Preparation, is making an ill use of the Sacrament, and frustrating the good effects of it. What care ought we to take? So many Confessions, and so little Amendment! To eat so often a Heavenly Food, and lead a sensual Life! The Christian who has once worthily communicated, has strength enough to sustain a Martyrdom: Where are you then? &c.

III. That which ought to make us tremble, is, that when we receive the Body of our Lord, without a true Contrition for our Sins, we eat our own Damnation, according to the words of

34 The Eighteenth Day.

St. Paul. Oh ! What will become of us when we must make Reparation for the Blood of Jesus, so often prophan'd in unworthy and sacrilegious Receivings ?

Consider the Defect of your Confessions and Receivings, and follow the Example of that truly Pious Soul, which never approached the Sacrament, but in such a Disposition as if it were immediately to die.

Probet seipsum homo, 1 Cor. 11.

But let a Man examine himself, &c.

*Sunt Christiani mali qui vocantur fideles,
Et non sunt, in quibus Sacra menta Christi patiuntur injuriam, St. Aug.*

They are Christians who are only so in Name, and not in Effect. These are those who dishonour and prophane the Sacraments of Jesus Christ.

The Nineteenth Day.

Of the Lord's Supper in particular:

I: **O** Ul R receiving the Lord's Supper, is a Remembrance of Christ's Death on the Cross. We cannot please God better, than by going often to his Table, to perform this Duty like true Christians

Christians; we ought to joyn in Devotion with the Minister, or rather unite our Hearts with Christ himself in this great Oblation to God.

II. We offend God every Moment, and our Sins deserve no less than eternal Punishment. How can we possibly make satisfaction for them, since all the Mortifications of Repentance, all the Sufferings of the Martyrs, and all the Afflictions of the miserable, can never be able to aquit us of the least of our Debts to God, without often receiving the Blessed Communion, and applying to us the Merits of Jesus Christ?

III. God would not suffer such Wickedness in the World, were it not in some manner aton'd by a frequent Commemoration of the Death of our Lord and Saviour. The Arm of Divine Justice is suspended by this Holy Victim: Our Sins cry aloud for Vengeance, but this Sacrifice of Jesus Christ calls aloud for Mercy. Let us adore then the Son of God in a Devout Commemoration of his Death, and a frequent attendance on his Altar. What a shame is it for us to see the Courts of Princes so crowded, and the House of God so empty?

Make

6 The Twentieth Day.

Make a firm Resolution of often receiving the Sacrament, and with Reverence suitable to so great a Duty. Approach the Table of the Holy Communion with the same concern, as if you were going to behold the Death of our Saviour upon Mount Calvary.

In omni laco sacrificatur, & offertur nomine meo oblatio munda, Malach. I.

In every place Incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure offering.

Tunc vere pro nobis hostia erit Deo, cum nosmet ipsos hostiam fecerimus, St. Greg.

Nothing can be more truly acceptable, than our often rememb'ring the Sacrifice of Christ's Death, when, together with it, we offer up our selves to God.

The Twentieth Day.

Of Charity.

L **O** How infinitely are we obliged to Jesus, for having given us an occasion to do him good, in substituting the Poor in his Place! He is in the Sacrament to receive our Adorations, and give

give nourishment to our Souls. He is in the Poor to draw our Compassion, and be nourished by the Faithful. Happy is the Man who gives Alms to Jesus Christ, but miserable is the Wretch that refuseth them to him. You feed your Dog with your own Hands, and let Christ perish with Hunger, Oh, the Injustice! Oh, the Barbarity!

II. What we give to great Men, is for the most part lost, but that to God, never: He renders all back with Interest, and pays liberally, even to a Glass of Water. Gaming, Luxury and Debauchery, have ruin'd many Families, but Charity never impoverish'd one. It is an excellent way to grow Rich, that of giving to the Poor.

III. Men shall be judged at the last Day according to their A&ts of Charity in this World. What Answer will the evil Rich Men be able to make, when the Poor shall accuse them of their Hardness? When Jesus Christ himself shall reproach them in these Terms, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was*

was

was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloathed me not, &c. A Heart that is heard to the Poor, is the Heart of a Reprobrate: On the contrary, a Soul truly Charitable, is a Soul predestinated. What will our Judge have to say against us, when he shall see our Clothes upon himself, our Bread and Wealth in his Hands? We have nothing to fear at the Tribunal of the Divine Justice, if the Poor Man does but plead our Cause.

Consider how you use the Poor, if you treat them as the Members of Jesus Christ, if you do them all the good that is in your power.

Fæneratur Domino, qui miseretur pauperibus, Prov. 19.

He that hath pity upon the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord.

Date omnibus; ne cui non dederitis, ipse sit Christus. St. Aug.

Be charitable to all who ask it, for fear you refuse it to Christ himself in Person.

The one and twentieth Day.

Of Example.

I. **I**LL Example hath Damn'd more than good hath saved. If Hell were laid open, so that we might look into it to discourse the Damn'd, we should scarce find one amongst them, who would not say such a he, or such a she has Damn'd me. What a sad Reckoning will this be? We are commanded to Love our Enemies, why do we then contribute to the Destruction of Souls that have never done us any harm? How great reason has that Man to doubt of his own Salvation, who has been so unhappy as to be instrumental in destroying the Souls of others that were redeemed by the Blood of God himself? What can we hope from Jesus Christ, after having robb'd him of what cost him so dear?

II. Oh, Fathers and Mothers, who live not like Christians, it were better your Children had never been Born, or at least not of you! You have given them Life, only to give them Death, and that

40 The one and twentieth Day

that Death eternal. When at the Day of Judgment they shall require of your Hands their portion of Paradise, [what Answer will you be able to make them ?

III. Let us cloath our selves with Jesus Christ, according to the words of St. Paul ; let his Spirit, his Conduct, and his Virtues be so suitable in us, that whosoever takes notice of our Actions, must of necessity remember him. A good Life contributes as much to the Edification of our Brethren, as a scandalous one to their Damnation.

Take heed of doing anything, which may prove occasion of Scandal to your Neighbours ; and beg pardon of God for the Sins of others, of which you have been the cause. Have we not Crimes enough of our own, without loading our selves with other Mens ?

Vae homini per quem scandalum venit,
Matt. 18.

Wo to that Man by whom the offence cometh.

Pro tanto reus, quanto secum traxerit in reatum, Salvian.

The wicked are answerable for all those they have drawn along with them into Destruction.

The

The two and twentieth Day.

Of Sufferings.

I. WE were not made Members of Christ's Church to heap up Riches, and live in Pleasure : There was no necessity of Christianity to introduce this, the World was well practis'd in it before. A Christian Life is a crucified Life : We must Love the Cross, or renounce the Creed.

II. What says the Gospel ? *Happy are those that weep ; but woe to you Rich, who have your Consolation in this World !* This is the Language of the Holy Ghost, but in this Age it seems a barbarous one, known only at *Canada* and *Japan*, where the Faithful run to Martyrdom. We must blot this Article of Sufferings out of the *European* Gospel. Do we believe that Felicity consists in Tears, and that the Rich are unhappy ? Yet this is an Article of our Faith ; the Belief of which is not less necessary to our Salvation, than that of the Trinity and Incarnation.

III. It.

40 The two and twentieth Day

III. It was necessary for the Son of God to die on the Cross, before he could take Possession of Glory. None of the Saints could enter Heaven, but by the way of Sufferings. Can we imagine to have that for nothing, which cost the Son of God and Saints so dear? The Cross is the Portion and Mark of the Elect; the Soul that never does, nor will suffer any thing, has the Character of a Reprobate stamp'd on it: We must of necessity suffer, either in this, or the next World.

*Hear Jesus Christ crucified, and beg Grace
to participate with him in his Life of
Sufferings, that you may partake with
him in his Life of Glory.*

*Qui non bajulat crucem suam, non est, me
dignus, Luc. 14.*

Whosoever doth not bear his Cross, and come after me, cannot be my Disciple, and is unworthy of me.

*Pudeat sub spinato capite membrum fieri
delicatum, St. Bern.*

What shame is it for the Members of Christ's Church to live in delicacy, when their Head is Crown'd with Thorns?

The

The three and twentieth Day.

Of Conformity to the Will of God.

I. THE greatest Happiness of a rational Creature, is to perform the Will of his Creator. It is in this that true Piety consists. Saints are no otherwise Saints, but by having their Will's conformable to God's : Whatever Virtues you have besides, if you want this, you are not truly devout.

II. The Soul that is dissatisfied at what God commands, does in some manner incroach upon his Authority. To desire that the things of this World should go otherwise than they do, is to wish its Government out of God's hands ; whatever happens to us, is by his order. Is it not just that we consent to whatsoever infinite Wisdom ordains ?

III. Nothing happens to us by God's Appointment, but what is for our good. Though I should see him hold out a Sword, I am satisfied that his Hand would be guided by his Heart. What have I then to fear from the Heart that Loves me? I will only what he wills. It is

44 The three and twentieth Day.

is in vain to complain of Heat or Cold, Losses or Sickness, &c. All these change their Nature and Name, by passing through the Hands of God : What the World calls bad Times, Afflictions or Disgrace, if we consider them as ordain'd by God, are Advantages, good Fortune and Heavenly Favours.

*Renounce your own Will, and pray that
the Will of God may take place.*

Ita Pater, &c.

O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me ; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Ille placet Deo, cui placet Deus, St. Aug.
It is then that we please God, when his Will is pleasing to us.

The four and twentieth Day.

Of Trust in God.

I. **A** Man trusts his Health with the Physician, the Writings of his Estate with a Lawyer, and his Life, if he be blind, with a Child, and sometimes with a Dog ; and can we make any difficulty

The four and twentieth Day. 45

ficulty of giving up our selves to the
Conduct of God?

II. The Divine Providence extends its care, even to the meanest Insects. What can we apprehend who are created after the likeness of God, and redeem'd by the Blood of Christ? God provides for Infidels, who do not acknowledge him, and is good to the wicked, who blaspheme his Name; what will he then do for Christians, who Honour and Love him?

III. Our concerns are much better in his Hands than our own. Let's leave our selves to him, for he is our Father and Mother. The Tenderness he has for his Children, obliges him to have care of them; he has promised us his Protection, and will not fail of his Word; Heaven and Earth will sooner perish, than the Man who puts confidence in God.

Examine your Heart, and see if the Trust it has in God, be worthy of his Bounty, and the Merits of Jesus Christ.

Deus meus es tu, in manibus tuis fortes meæ, Psal. 31.

Thou art my God, my times are in thy Hand.

Projice

The five and twentieth Day. 46

Projice te in eum, non se substrahet uicadas, St. Aug.

Cast up your self into the Arms of the Lord, for he will not let you fall.

The five and twentieth Day.

Of the Love of God.

I. **G**O D so Loved us, that he gave even his only Son for us: Had he had any thing dearer, he would have bestowed it on us. Was it not a dear Purchase of our Love to buy it at so great a price? A little kindness requires our Love, why should we not then Love an infinite Bounty? What! Because it is infinite; does it cease to be amiable?

II. God commands me to Love him; is it a rigorous Command to Love a Beauty infinitely amiable? He commands us to Love him with all our Heart; is one little Heart too much for so great a God? But who exacts all, excepts nothing; whatsoever part I give, if I give not the whole, I give nothing.

III. If Eternity could end, the Devils would think Hell no Punishment, so they

The five and twentieth Day. 47

they did obtain the Grace to Love God. There is not a damn'd Soul who would not esteem himself happy, if after innumerable Ages of Torments, he could perform one act of Love. We can now love God if we please, without any Pain or Trouble : Not to Love him when we can, is to be worse than the Devils themselves.

Banish all other Affections, and make it your Business to love God above all things.

Si charitatem non habuero, nihil sum, I Cor. 13.

And though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge, and though I have all Faith , so that I could remove Mountains, and have no Charity, I am nothing.

The six and twentieth Day.

Of our Saviour's Love towards us.

NOthing was bought at a dearer rate than our Souls : The Life of God was the Price of them. We deserved

48 The six and twentieth Day.

served Hell : The Devil and his Tribes, called every Day for the Punishment of our Sins : Christ listened to his Heart, and that begg'd Mercy for us ; he had Compassion on us, and gave even to the last Drop of his Blood for our Redemption ; so that if we did not belong to God as our Creator, yet we must needs belong to Jesus Christ as our Redeemer ; the least we can pay him, is our Acknowledgement for the good he hath done us ; if we give him not Life for Life, at least let us render him Love for Love.

II. I give my Dog a Bone that has nothing on it ; for this nothing he Loves me, Fawns on me, and guards me. Christ gives me his Grace, his Blood, his Merit, his Treasure, and I continue insensible. Learn, Learn ungrateful and unnatural Soul, thy duty of a Beast. Thy Dog is thy Instru~~c~~ter ; if his Example do not reform thee, thou art the greater Brute of the two,

III. We have commonly very tender Hearts for our Friends , we are sensible of the good Offices they do us ; shall Jesus Christ be the only Person for whom we have ingratitude and hardness of Heart ?

The seven and twentieth Day 49

Heart? Which of our Friends has been crucified for us?

Beg the love of Jesus Christ, of Jesus Christ himself: We cannot love him without his Grace.

Si quis non amat Dominum Jesum sit Anathema, 1 Cor. 16.

If a Man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *Anathema Marnatha*.

Si totum me debeo pro me factō, quid addam pro refectō, & refectō hoc modo? St. Bern.

If I owe my self wholly to God for having created me, what is due to him for his having redeem'd me, and that after so excellent a manner?

The seven and twentieth Day.

Of Loving our Neighbour.

I. **H**E that Loves not his Neighbour cannot be truly said to Love God. Whatever good Actions we perform, we do nothing, if we Love not our Brethren. Martyrdom it self is not acceptable to God, without Charity.

II. *This is my Commandment, says our Saviour*

D

50 The seven and twentieth Day.

Saviour, *love one another, as I have loved you.* If Man had nothing in him worthy our Love, yet his being Beloved of Jesus Christ, is a sufficient Obligation on us to Love him with all our Hearts. I should be very delicate not to Love what my Saviour has Loved more than himself.

III. Do I Love all Men, as Jesus Christ has Loved me? That is to say, Am I ready to lay down my Life and Fortune for them? How rare is it to find this Devotion amongst Christians, yet it is the true Devotion of Jesus Christ and good Christians?

Exite in your self Sentiments of Tenderness for those whom our Saviour hath so tenderly loved; and make a firm Resolution never to do any thing which may impair your Charity towards your Neighbour,
Qui diligit proximum, legem implevit,
Rom. 13.

He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law.

Dilecta sola discernit inter filios Dei & Diaboli, St. Aug.

It is Charity only that distinguisheth the Children of God from those of the Devil.

The

The eight and twentieth Day.

Of Loving our Enemies.

I. **C**Harity is so essential to Christianity, that we are obliged to Love, even our Enemies. Christ has not only commanded us, but shewed us an Example; God enjoyns it, and yet we make a difficulty of obeying. God forgave those Murderers who took away his Life; and shall not we pardon a little Injury committed by our Brethren?

II. There's no Mercy for the Soul that cannot pardon; God will forgive us, as we forgive others: The revengful condemns himself as often as he says the Lord's Prayer. We must Love our Enemies, or hate our selves.

III. Two Christians that hate each other, seem to be of different Religions; for what likelihood is there, that they who cannot endure one another, should approach the same Altar, eat the same Divine Food, believe the same Heaven, and hope to live together eternally? We are permitted to hate none but the Devils; and it belongs only to the damned to hate one another. There is not a su-

32 The nine and twentieth Day

rer, or greater sign of a Réprobate, than that of not forgiving: The Soul that hath this Character stamp'd on it, is mark'd out for Hell.

Examine your Heart in the presence of Christ crucified, and if you find there is hatred for any one, take Thoughts of Charity from the Wounds of Jesus.

Qui odet fratrem suum, homicidia, est.
I Johan. 3.

Whosoever hateth his Brother is a Murderer.

Vindicari vis christianus, nondum vindicatus est Christus? St. Aug.

Do you seek revenge, being a Christian, when the Death of Christ is yet unrevenged.

The nine and twentieth Day

Of the imitation of our Saviour.

I. **T**H E first Man lost himself by attempting to be like God, all the rest must be saved, by endeavouring to be like the Son of God: He made himself our Pattern in making himself Man. We ought to resemble him, he is the first Predestinate, and not to be like him, is to be a Reprobate.

II. We

The nine and twentieth Day 53

II. We study with great care the Modes and Manners of the World, but have not so much as reflected on the Life of Jesus Christ. Courtiers conform themselves to their Prince : The very defects of Philosophers were followed by their Disciples ; yet have we ever thought seriously of imitating the Vertues of the Son of God ? What shame is it for us not to have made so much as one Step after him ? What Disparagement for him to march before us, and have no body follow him.

III. What shall I say at the Day of Judgment when I shall be compared with my Model, when they shall oppose the Life of Jesus Christ to mine, his Humility to my Pride, his Wounds to my Delicacy, his Sweetness to my Anger, &c. Ah ! What a Monster shall I seem ? A Christian without Christianity ! Baptiz'd, and a Slave of the Devil ! Under the Character of the Cross, and a Partaker of the Flesh and the World ! We must then renounce our Baptism and Profession of Christianity, or lead a Life, as near as we can possibly, like that of our Saviours. The best Definition of Christianity, is an imitation of Jesus Christ.

*See if there be in you any Foot-step of the Son
of God, and if by your manner of Life,
you may be counted a Disciple of Jesus.*

Magister, sequar te quocunque abieris,
Matth. 8.

Master, I will follow thee whithersoever
thou goest.

*Quia causa sum Christianus, si Chrestum
non sequor ? St. Bern.*

I am in the wrong to call my self a Chris-
tian, if I do not imitate Jesus Christ.

The thirtieth Day.

Of Zeal in the Service of God.

I. **L**E T us have as much Zeal for
God, as he hath for us ; let us
endeavour our own Salvation with as
much Fervency as he does : He never
acts beneath his *Majesty*, but when it is
to save our Souls : All the Desires of
his Heart, all the Cares of his Prov-
idence, all the Tenderness of his Mercy
terminate there. What Confusion must
this raise in a lukewarm Soul ?

II. Were God to be judged by the base-
ness of our carriage, one would think him
not worthy to be served, or that his Re-
wards

The thirtieth Day. 55

wards were of no value ; what Opinion can we have of that Master, whose Servants serve him negligently, and without Affection ? We dishonour God, and disparage his Service by every negligent performance of his Will. Wo to the Man that carelessly performs the Work of God !

III. One Action done for God , tho' never so little, is worth more than all those of Heroes and Conquerors. Is our Courage so much raised on the account of Vanity ? What shall we do then for Eternity ? Alas ! The Servants of the Devil spare no Pains, they never complain whatsoever they endure, nothing disheartens them. Is Jesus Christ less to be regarded than the Devils ? Is Paradise less worth then Hell ? Ah, for the future Hell shall be my School. To Love God as the damn'd hate him, to serve God as we serve the World and the Devil, is that too much ?

*Examine your Carriage in the Service of
God , consider your Actions, and see in
what you are most remiss, and endea-
vour for the future to render your self
more worthy the service of so great a
Master.* D 4 Spi.

56 The Thirtieth Day.

Spiritu ferventes, Domino servientes,
Rom. 12.

Fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord.

*Quales impetus habebas ad mundum, tales
habebas ad artificem mundi, St. Aug.*

Love the Creator of the World, as
much as you do the World.]

THAT the Fruit of these Me-
ditations may be reaped by
every Person in the Practice of a
pure Life, we thought fit to sub-
joyn an account of that Purity
and Innocence which the Christian
Religion exacts of us.

Of the Purity of Manners, which
the Christian Religion enjoyns.

I. **T**H E Christian Religion differs from others in many things, but chiefly in its Morals ; because Christianity absolutely condemns all manner of Sin. Paganism (which has reign'd for many Ages) does not only permit, but Authorise such Crimes as Nature it self abhors. There have been Idolaters, who out of a Principle of Piety, have Murdered their Aged Parents ; and it was one Point of their Faith, to believe, That their Gods delighted in Human Blood : Accordingly they sacrificed Men in their VVorship of *Ceres* and *Bacchus*. VVe must add to these Practices the Robberies and Adulteries permitted by the Laws of *Plato* and *Lycurgus*. To say nothing of the incestuous Marriages amongst the *Persians* ; but what was yet more abominable, the very Ceremonies of their Religion were so horrible, as must make a

§8 Of the purity and Charity

I sober Man tremble to think upon them ; witness those Holy Mysteries (as they term'd them) which were performed to *Ceres and Bacchus*. Nor can we think it strange, that that Religion which Deified the worst of Men, should prescribe nothing but Vice to be practised. It was therefore an excellent saying of St. *Cyri-an*, *Deos suos quos venerantur, imitantur, flunt misericordia & delicia religiosa* ; they imitate those Gods whom they VVorship, whose Crimes become the Object of their Religion.

As for Mahumetism, all the VWorld knows that it is impure and brutal Religion, that indulges sensual Appetites, and places the Happiness of Man in the Pleasures of Beasts.

But the Christian Religion forbids all manner of vicious Actions, not only in general, but particular ; for Christianity (according to St. *Gregory of Nice*) being an imitation of God, whose VWill is just, and Justice it self, cannot subsist without the Practice of the least Vice.

II. Our Religion does not only prohibit greater Sins, but even the smallest laying Restrain upon the least disorderly action, upon words that make the least Encroac-

Encroachment on Modesty or Charity, upon the least lascivious Glance of the Eye, or immodest Gesture that may give offence to our Neighbour. Murder was forbidden by the Old Law, but in the New, the least start of Passion, the least reproachful Word, or disdainful Look, are sufficient to make us guilty in the sight of God. What shall I say? The most obliging Words that are not accompanied with Truth; these little officious Lyes which have the appearance of Kindness, and spring from no Evil intention, are yet forbidden to a Christian, because they deviate from Truth, every Lye being contrary to the Law of Nature. Even vain and unprofitable Words are by Christianity held sinful, although they oppose neither Modesty, Charity, nor Truth: Wherefore an account must be rendred of them, because they conduce neither to a Rational, nor Christian End. If therefore idle Words will not be permitted, what shall we say of idle Actions, which have not respect to Faith, which is the Rule of a Christian; nor to Reason, which should be the Rule of Man.

III. Nor does Christianity only condemn

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demn such VVords or Actions as are Criminal, but it also condemns the Desire and Inclination to Sin. Human Laws may well forbid Rapins and Murders, but they cannot forbid the Desire, because the Hearts of Men are not in their Jurisdiction ; *Lux manum, non animam prohibet* : This is only the Prerogative of Divine Laws, whose Legislator is Sovereign of the Heart, but amongst Divine Laws themselves. This is particular to Christianity, and distinguisheth it from that of the Synagogue. Our Saviour in his Church has left no Orders for Sacrifices, but instead of the Blood of Bulls and Goats, he requires Innocence of Mind ; as *Lactantius* has well expressed it : *In religone christana pro sacrificio exigitur bona mens, purum pectus.* It is not enough for me to keep my Hands clean, my Eyes modest, and my Mouth chaste, my Heart must likewise be pure. If I entertain a loose desire at the sight of a VVoman, I am guilty before God, as if I had committed the Crime. It is what our Savour himself has affirmed, *Ego autem dico, vobis, quia omnis qui viderit mulierem ad eam concupiscendum, jam macchatus est eam in corde.* For the better under-

understanding this Doctrine of our Sa-
viour, we must take notice, that we have
an inheritent Concupiscence, the fatal Le-
gacy of our first Parents ; Divines call
it, *formes peccati*, the Fewel of Sin, al-
ways apt to take fire, whereby it en-
flames the VVill, and hurries it into Evil.
Our VVill being thus enflamed, and o-
verpowered by this Concupiscence, has
two several Motions ; the first involun-
tary and indeliberate, as Divines term
it ; such are the impulses from Objects
at the first sight, before our Reason has
considered them ; the others are volun-
tary, which arise in the Mind, after due
knowledge and reflection. This second
sort are justly criminal in us, because we
are herein Masters of our selves, and such
are those Heart-Adulteries which our
Saviour forbids Christians to commit.
But although Christianity does not con-
demn those first Motions, as Sins, yet it
condemns them as Effects of that irregu-
lar Concupiscence we spoke of, and en-
joyns us to resist them as Seeds and Be-
ginnings of Sin ; they are, as it were,
young Lions and Tigers too little to
harm you as yet, but they are Lions
and Tigers still, which if you permit
them

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them to grow, will daily become more fierce, till at last they destroy the owner that bred them.

IV. The Purity of the Christian Religion goes yet much farther; it defends it self against the thought of Evil, for fear least that thought should excite a Concupiscence, which by little and little, may corrupt the Will. It is upon this account that Divines condemn as Sin, the very Thought of an obscene Object, to which the Mind gives the least consent: Wherefore we are not permitted to give liberty to our Imaginations of wandering where they please. Every Christian should say with Job, I have made a Covenant with my Eyes, that I will not look upon a Maid: The Words, *pepigi fædus*, most admirably express that Engagement in our Baptism, which, by the Fathers, is called a *Pact* or *Contract*. What does a Christian promise in Baptism? He makes a Covenant, not only with God and his Church, but likewise with himself, with his Eyes, with his Heart and Spirit, to regard nothing, to covet nothing, to think on nothing that is dishonest.

V. Christianity does not only retrench
those

those Seeds or Beginnings of Sin that are within us, but it likewise restrains us from whatsoever may prove occasions of it. *If your right Eye offend you, put it out; if your right Hand or Foot offend you, cut them off,* says our Saviour. The Fathers interpret these Passages of the Occasions of Sin, which they conceive to be meant by those Words of our Lord. As we part with the most noble and useful Member (even the Hand or Eye, to preserve the whole Body) so when one Creature becomes to us the occasion of Sin, we must part with it at any rate; *pluck it out, and cast it from thee,* says our Saviour: He does not only say Pluck out your Eye, but cast it far from you, to shew what distance we should keep from all occasions of Evil and dangerous Inducements to it.

VI. The Christian Religion does not only express great horror against Sin, but it does all that it possibly can to destroy it, both Root and Branch; for which Reason it condemns those earthly Goods that are causes of Sin to us; not for their own sake, but only for the abuse of them. You see here what is meant by those Maxims, Precepts, and Counsels of the Gospel

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Gospel, that enjoy us to renounce and tread under Foot all Earthly Goods, Riches Honours, and Pleasures, though lawful in themselves.

St. Cyril informs us, that the Nazarenes were not only prohibited the use of Wine, but likewise tasting of the Grape, because of their Affinity; so that one may be an Inducement to the other; so Christianity does not only restrain itself from Sin, but from all things that have any tendency thereto.

VII. In the last Place, Christianity obliges us, not only to abstain from actual Sin, but even to fly from the smallest shadow of it, according to St. Paul, from *all appearance of evil*: To make good our calling and become worthy Sons of an unspotted Church. A Christian ought not to come under Suspicion of Sin, but say to himself as a Prince did to *Augustus*; *it behoveth us not to seem to commit evil*; *it is sufficient for private Men, that they do no ill, but for Princes not to be so much as suspected*. So for Christians, who are Heirs of the heavenly Kingdom, it is necessary that they lead unblamable Lives without giving the least occasion of Censure or Suspicion.

AN ADVERTISEMENT Concerning the Practice of MENTAL PRAYER.

HE that is perswaded that Mental Prayer is a difficult exercise, and that all Men are not capable of it, is mistaken, for meditating, there is no more knowledge required, than to comprehend that we ought to seek after what is useful to us ; that we ought to avoid that which is hurtful ; and that what is good deserves our Love. A Husband-man thinks often on ways how to make his Labour prosper : By his own Reflections he frames to himself an Art of cultivating the Land, why may not he then be thought capable of thinking sometimes on the means of his own Salvation, and of reforming his Life, by reflecting upon the little Conformity that there is in his Actions with the Law of God, that he hath been taught, and the terrible Judgments wherewith his Disorders

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ders will be punished? If Persons so simple and ignorant can meditate usefully, it is plain, that it is a dangerous Wile of the Devil, to perswade so many People that they are incapable of it. I say nothing of those who excuse themselves from the Duty of Prayer, upon the account they are otherwise too much taken up about Business: There is so little Reason for that excuse, that I cannot be perswaded, that they who alledge it, believe in good earnest that it will pass with God. The most important Business of life, is to work out our own Salvation. As to Worldlings who will not meditate because the use of Meditation insensibly inspires a certain Spirit of Reservedness and Modesty, which suits not with the spirit of the World; I agree with them, that it is hard long to practice that Divine Exercise, and retain the Spirit of the World; and I am ready to confess that that's the only end why I should engage them to it. But I beseech them to consider, that since they must one day forsake that Spirit so opposite to the Spirit of Jesus Christ, if they wculd be saved, there is no more easie, nor less violent means than that, to mortifie the same.

Mental Prayer, according to the Definition

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nition that St. John Damascene gives of it, is, An Elevation to the Soul of God. Of this, there are two sorts; the one Extraordinary, for which no Rules can be given, because it consists in certain Operations of God upon the Soul, which only depend on him: The other Ordinary, which is done by the three faculties of the Soul, assisted by Grace. Holy Men have given several Precepts concerning that, of which I think it will not be improper here to give an Abridgement.

I. Regulate the time that you will allow for Prayer, according to your Affairs, and the Counsel of your Minister; but be faithful in employing it, and endeavour so to dispose of your Business, that you may every day pray at the same Hour. If you can do it in the Morning, it is the time of the day that holy men have judg'd most proper for prayer.

II. Remove as much as you can from noise, and the sight of Men, when you pray; seek out a solitary place that nothing may hinder you; for it is in silence and retreat that God communicates himself to the Soul, according to that saying of the Holy Ghost; I will bring her into the Wilderness, and speak comfortably to her.

III. Before you go to Prayer consider first

first on the Subject you are to meditate, and read some Book that treats of it. Many prepare themselves in the Evening against next Morning; and it is the advice of several Ho'y Men to think on it again in the Morning so soon as one is awake.

IV. Begin always your prayer by the Contemplation of the presence of God; prostrate your self on the Ground before him, and adore him, according to the Example of Jesus Christ in the Garden of Olives, and beg of him Grace to pray aright.

V. To curb your Imagination, Form to your self always a sensible Image of that you have a mind to meditate, as much as the Subject will admit. If you meditate on a Mystery, or some Action of the Life of our Lord, you may represent to your self the place where it pass'd, and the Persons who were concerned in it. If you meditate on some passages of Scripture, represent to your self the Person that spoke them, as if they were addressed to your self; for all that is written, saith St. Paul, is written for our Instruction. There are few things which you may not so represent to your self under some sensible Figure. The Holy Scripture gives us an Instance of it, when it describes sin under the Figure of a Leprosie

God

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God, under that of the Sun ; and when it sets forth to us its infinite Perfection by things created, which are the Images of them, as his Immensity by the Sea, his Love by Fire, and his Wisdom by Light.

VI. Reason upon your Subject until you have drawn from it some light proper to raise in you either holy Affections towards God, or efficacious Resolutions for the ordering of your Life : As to which there are two important things to be observed. The first, that you must not pass from one Affection to another, until the Sentiment of the first begin to languish, and touch your Heart no more. The second, that in the Resolutions you make for the ordering of your Life, it is good to descend to the particulars of your Actions, and thereto apply the Holy Maxims which you propose to your self to follow. There are some industrious souls, who at the end of Prayer, write down the pious Thoughts that they have had in it, and the Holy Resolutions they have taken, to the end they may remember them, when Occasion presents for the putting them in practice.

VII. If God comfort you in your Prayer, and give you a sensible tast of his Truths, it is a gift of his Grace, which you ought thankfully

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fully to receive ; but be not proud of it, neither rely too much upon it. The Excellence of Prayer consists not in sensible Consolations ; oftentimes the beginners have more of them than the Perfect, and there is danger, lest in seeking Consolation with too much Anxiety, one may lose him who gives it.

VIII. If you find a Dejection or Dulness of Heart, be not discouraged, God hides himself sometimes from the soul to try it, but he never withdraws from it. When that happens to you, humble your self before God, and consider your self in his Presence, as a poor Beggar, who ought to wait with Patience for that which is to be given to him, because there is nothing due to him. Be sometimes urgent with him, as the spouse did, to shew himself unto you, and to let you hear his Voice ; tell him that your soul, in his absence, is as a Depth without Light, and as a Land without Water. But above all things, be always in a perfect Submission to his Will : Tell with the devout Author of the Imitation of Jesus Christ ; Blessed be thou, if I be comforted, and Blessed be thou also, if I be desolate. For in fine, whether you be joyful, or whether you be afflicted, what matters it, provided God be glorified ?

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glorified? Your darkness will bless him as well as your light if you seek only to please him, let him work his own work, he knows better than you what is for his Interest and Glory.

I should here say a word or two concerning the following Meditations: To persuade the Use of them, I might alledge, That they are short, and there needs but very little time to read them; That they are of a plain style, and proper enough to inspire the Sentiments that are expressed in them. But seeing the Goodness of such Writings, and the Fruits which they produce, depend on the success which it pleases Divine Providence to give them, I have thought it better to commit this entirely into the Hands of God, than to make use of Reasons meerly human, to oblige good Souls to use them, since he who writes these Meditations propos'd to himself no other end, but the Glory of God; whatever his Providence appoints, he will be content with, because he well knows that God always finds his Glory in the fulfilling of his own Will.

OF THE E N D O F M A N,

And the Advantages that are to be
had in the Service of G O D.

Meditation I.

God created Man to serve him..

I **G**O D created me to serve him, why don't I do it? It's a trouble to submit to God, but none at all to submit to the Devil. I follow the Maxims of the World, though they torment and rack me, and I cannot lay the least constraint upon my self for keeping the Commandments of God.

II. God made me only for himself, it is unjust then for me to divide my self betwixt

betwixt him and the World. It's no wonder that the World sometimes admits that Division ; it is much that it hath the hate of a thing which does not at all belong to it ; but God, to whom I wholly belong, will never suffer it ; *One cannot serve two Masters.*

III. There's no standing neutral betwixt God and the World : If I be not for God, I am against him ; if I labour not for him, he will, as he himself says, deal with me, as with an unfaithful Servant, who lavishes away his Goods : I must of necessity declare my self.

Meditation II.

The Soul findeth rest in the Service of God.

Every thing is at rest, when it is where it should be : When the Fire is in its Sphere, it acts no more, because it is there where Nature would have it to be. When Man is united to God, he is at his Center, and so it is natural for him to be in Tranquility. *Return at length unto thy rest, O my Soul ! Without* there is no true Happiness in

Life ; and without God there is no true Rest for you.

II. A Heart firmly united to God, is pleas'd with nothing besides God : He is at the Fountain of all Happiness, and though at present he enjoy him but imperfectly, the Pleasure he takes in doing the will of God, stands him in stead of a perfect Fruition. How great a fund of Peace does that Heart possess, which desireth nothing beyond, and is always content with what it hath ?

III. Nothing afflicts a true Servant of God. As it is enough to give him content, that God's Will be done upon him, so is he indifferent in what manner it be done ; let him be Poor or Rich, in Health or Sickness, commended or blamed, all is alike to him ; because in all alike he finds the Will of God. In this State ought I then to be, if I would enjoy perfect Repose.

Meditation III.

Worldlings are never at rest.

I. When I meet with a worldly Man who tells me, That the Life he leads, is a pleasant Life, I have great cause to mistrust him, and believe that he would seduce me. A Life that is not peaceable and quiet, is never pleasant; and God assures me, That there is no peace to the Wicked; he is more to be believed than they.

II. How can there be peace in the Soul of a worldling? All things are out of order, nothing's there in its proper place; Reason there truckles to Passions, and the Passions themselves jarr amongst themselves; one Desire struggles with another; the Heart many times knows not what side to take; if it satisfie the one it discontents the other; if it divide it self, it provokes both. O my God, how true is it, that a disturbed Spirit is its own Punishment!

III. There might still be some advantage in that Disorder, if it could silence the secret Voice of Conscience, which

troubles the Wicked in their Pleasures; but do what they can, they must hear it, they must listen to its Reproaches and Threatnings. Can, indeed, that Man be capable of Joy, who is obliged to carry about with him in all places his Executioner, and to have always before his Eyes the Image of the Punishment that is prepared for him ?

Meditation IV.

True Liberty is not to be found, but in the Service of God.

I. **O** How inconsiderate Men are ! they seek after Liberty, and make themselves strangers to God. He that is not the Servant of God, has many Masters ; he serves the World, which hath its Laws ; he serves his Self-love that hath its Maxims ; he serves his Passions, which have most different Inclinations. To be a Servant to a hundred Masters, so as never to please one, without being punished by all the rest, is that to be free ?

II. But where is that Liberty to be found, which is sought by estranging ones self from God ? I can see it nowhere

in this World : It is not at Court nor amongt great Men ; for no where are Men more low, more uneasie, and more depresso'd than there ; it is not in Offices, nor in the Administration of Publick Affairs ; for nothing lays a greater Constraint upon Men ; they are responsible to all Men for their Actions : It is not in a private Life, that is pester'd likewise with Affairs and Incumbrances. O ye Children of this World ! how hard a Bondage is the Liberty wherewith ye Flatter your selves ?

III. There is no true Liberty, but the Liberty of the Sons of God. *When Men are united to God, they possess his Spirit ; and where the Spirit of God is, there is always Liberty.* God forms the Will of those that fear him, when it is right, and when it is not, he reforms it by conforming it to his own, without forcing or constraining it. What is it to be free, if it be not to do always that which one hath a mind to do ?

Meditation V.

God takes a particular Care of those that serve him.

I. **W**e many times complain, that we are overcharged with the Cares of the World; well we deserve it, since 'tis our own Fault, we are not delivered from them. Let us give up ourselves to God, and we shall be free: let us serve God, and we shall want nothing.

II. To Man a Sinner, and to Man disobedient, it was said, *In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat Bread.* But the contrary hath been said to the Servants of God; *Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be cloathed? for our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of all these things.*

III. Providence so disposes all things for the Servants of God, that every thing goes well with them; their very Infirmities are not unprofitable to them, they make them a ground of Humility and Confusion, which equally encrease their Faith and Zeal. O how pleasant is it to serve a Master with whom nothing is lost, and who rewards even the Shame of his Servants, in that they have not been faithful to him.

Meditation V.

Meditation VI.

*God guides and protects his Servants
by a particular Providence.*

I. **W**E are Travellers in this World, through which we take different Roads : What care doth not God take to prevent his Servants from losing their way ? on that account he busies his Angels, and employs his Graces ; he makes himself their Guide by secret Inspirations, he adviseth them what to do, and what to avoid. *Blessed is the Man, O Lord, whom thou vouchsafeth to teach thy Law.*

II. God protects his Servants. When once I am his, I shall fear no more any thing ; I shall not be afraid of Men, they shall not pluck a Hair from my Head, for which he will not call them to an account. I will not fear Devils, for they cannot hurt me without his Permission ; nay, I shall not fear even his destroying Angels, whom he sends to punish the Sins of the World ; for he sends always others before them to stamp the mark of his Protection upon the Foreheads of his Servants : : For if God be for us, who can be against us ?

III. God deals not so with the Wicked. Though he suffer the Sun to shine upon them, as well as the Just, yet he looks not on them with the same tender Affection; he has not the like concern for their Conduct and Preservation; they have forsook him, he forsakes them also; they have bid him *depart from them*, for *they would not learn the knowledge of his ways*; and therefore it is no wonder, if he permits them to go astray.

Meditation VII.

There is no true Pleasure, nor solid Joy to be found, but in the Service of God.

I. **H**ow great are the Pleasures, O Lord, that thou pourest forth into the Hearts of those that fear thee! The Men of the World conceive it not; they look upon thy Servants bowed down under thy Yoke, and pity them. If they saw how thou thy self helps them to carry it; if they felt that heavenly Union where-with thou softnest what they bear, they would envy their Happiness.

II. Nothing shews more the Frailty of the Pleasures of this World, than the Eager-

Eagerness and Greediness wherewith Worldlings hunt after them : If they were true Pleasures, less would suffice to content them. I have much more Reason to think, that the Pleasures of Saints are the true Pleasures : They who have once tasted them, cannot endure others ; they dispense with all, they abandon all ; and that's a sign that what they have contents them.

III. Pleasure wherewith one may be cloyed, is a counterfeit Pleasure. What is really Pleasure, is always so ; in what disposition soever the Soul be, it is touched with it, and finds its Content therein. Hitherto I am weary of every thing, there is nothing to be found, but Vanity and Vexation. Let us seek, my Soul, in fine, let us seek for more solid Joy ; it is not to be had, but in the House of God, and in those Rivers of Gladness, which are at his Right Hand. My Heart is made for the Pleasures of Heaven, all the Pleasures of Earth will never fill it.

OF SIN.

Meditation I.

Sin is the only Evil in this Life to be feared.

I. **N**Othing diverts me from my End, nothing makes me a Stranger to God, but Sin. *I am persuaded, said St. Paul, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* There is nothing but Sin that can do it, and therefore I have nothing to fear but Sin.

II. We know not what Evil is, when we say Sickness is a great Evil. There is no Evil in Life, but Sin, because nothing but Sin can hinder us from the Fruition of the Sovereign Good.

III. I should not be unhappy in Hell, if I could be there without Sin; and I should not be content in Paradise, if I could enter there with Sin. If I were in Hell

Hell without Sin, there I might enjoy God, and would be as contented as the Saints in Paradise are: if I were in Paradise with Sin, I should never there enjoy God, but suffer the cruellest Torments that the Damn'd in Hell suffer.

Meditation II.

How much God hateth Sin.

I. **T**HERE is no stronger Antipathy than that betwixt God and Sin: it is essential to them, and fastned to their Nature. If Sin could cease from being contrary to God, it would be no longer Sin; and if God could cease to hate Sin, he would be no longer God. I must not then expect to possess God so long as I am possessed by Sin; as Sin enters not into Heaven, because God reigns there, so God enters not into a Soul where Sin reigns.

II. God's great work in the World, is to destroy Sin; all that he does out of himself, tends only to that. If he send his Son upon Earth, it is to banish Sin thence; if he give us his Grace, it is to arm us against Sin; if he reward us, it is

is for having overcome Sin ; if he punish us, it is for loving Sin. This is a Work worthy of God, why do not I also make it mine ? I have so many occasions daily to hinder Sin, why don't I do it ? but alas ! whilst God labours to destroy Sin, do I not labour to plant it ?

III. God punishes Sin in whomsoever he finds it : he punish'd it in Angels, the most excellent of his Creatures, he punish'd it in Meu, whom he loved so tenderly ; he punish'd it in his own Son, tho' he had nothing but the imputation of it. Behold, my Soul, behold Jesus upon the Cross. There is an effect of the hatred that God hath to Sin. If God dealt so with his own Son, because he found him loaded with the Sins of others, how will he deal with a Slave laden with his own Crimes ?

Meditation III.

Sin is a Contempt of God, which cannot be sufficiently punished.

I. **O** My God, I tremble when I think on the severity of thy Judgments, and the terrible Punishments wherewith thou

thou chastisest Sinners : But when I think they are Creatures who have despised thee, I have nothing to say, but, *just art thou O Lord, and righteous are thy judgments.*

II. God despised, God less esteemed than a momentary Pleasure, than a concern of nothing ! God rejected, God banished from a Heart that hath known him, that hath taſted him, that knows his worth ! Can he ſufficiently revenge himself of ſo cruel an Injury ?

III. Nothing was more impudently done by the Jews to the Son of God, than the preferring a Robber before him : But after all, they were blind, they knew him not. The slight I put upon him, when I prefer before him a sensual Pleasure, or a vain shew of Honour (I who know what he is) ought to be ſo far more ſensible unto him.

Meditation IV.

Sin is extream Ingratitude towards God.

I. **G**O D thought on me when no body minded me, and when I was not in a Condition to mind my ſelf. H
gav

gave me Life and Reason, he created me to enjoy him ; by the price of his Blood he hath redeemed me from the slavery of the Devil. I was crowned with all these Blessings at my Birth, and I have lived with him from whom I have received them, as with mine Enemy ; what strange Ingratitude !

II. Had God done me much hurt, had he forsaken, abused and injured me, could I do more than I do to displease him ? Could I be more disobedient to his Commandments ? could I more insolently despise his Law ? could I be more averse to the Advancement of his Glory ? I act against God, who hath done unto me nothing but Good ; all that the Damned can act, to whom he does nothing but Evil.

III. To do evil to God, who hath never done me hurt, is to be very wicked. To do evil to God, who hath done me good, is to be extreamly ungrateful ; but to do evil to God, who hath done me good, and to make use of the good he hath done me, to do evil unto him, it is the blackest of all Crimes.

Meditation V.

How much Sin desolates and wastes a Soul, rendring it horrible in the Eyes of God.

I. SIN deprives the Soul of all that is most precious, and renders useless all that it cannot deprive it of. The Scripture compares it to a Tyrant, who plunders and sacks a place he is become Master of. Oh, how many are there who think themselves Rich, and are stript of all! but alas, the Riches of the Soul are reckon'd of no value!

II. I am ashamed to appear before Men with a Spot on my Face, and I dare appear before God cover'd all o'er with my Sins, which render me more horrible to his Eyes, than a Leprosie would be to the Eyes of Men. But I am afraid to offend the sight of Men, and fear not to offend the sight of God.

III. Men love neatness in all things, except in the Soul. They are neat in their Clothes, in their Houses, in their Equipment: They adorn all that relates to the Body, which is but of Clay, and will be one day but Corruption; and they neglect

neglect the Soul, which is Divine and Immortal. Let us leave, let us leave this Body in filth and corruption, we do it no wrong; but let us take care of the cleanness of our Soul, it participates somewhat of the Nature of God, it cannot be under Sin, but by violence.

Meditation VI.

There is no Sin small.

I. **S**OME Sins are said not to be great. Whatever is Sin, is great, since it is still an offence committed against God. O infinite Majesty! how little art thou known, when Men think they may offend thee, and not do a great evil?

II. How slight soever a Sin may be, it is still a greater evil than all evils together which are not Sin, because all evils which are not Sin, are only evils to Creatures, but Sin is an evil against God. If I could overturn the World, if I could annihilate all Angels and Men, without Sin, I should do a less evil than when I tell a Lye which is a Sin.

III. A Sin which Jesus Christ hath bewailed, and hath cost him his Blood;

a Sin

a Sin which God abhors, and he punisheth by Fire; a Sin that would eternally debar me from Paradise, if it were not expiated by the Sufferings of a Saviour; a Sin which cools God's Love towards me, which stops the supplies of his Graces, and puts me in the way of losing his Friendship; can that be a little Evil?

Meditation VII.

God very often punishes Sin in this Life.

I. GOD delays not always the Execution of his Wrath that he may punish Sinners in Hell, Seeing that they put their Confidence in the Blessings of this Life, making a Renunciation to the Comforts of Heaven, and are perswaded they may settle an happiness here below, which will last at least as long as themselves. God is concerned in Glory to trouble their Pleasures, and to let them see, that he is Sovereign over all.

II. These Chastisements are very common in the World; they are felt, it's true, but Men know not always whence they proceed. When an Accident or Sickness happen, Men complain of their bad

Fortune;

Fortune; and they ought to bewail their bad Conscience, which provokes God, and draws down all these Evils upon the Head of the Wicked.

III. If some great Sinners seem to us to be free from such Misfortunes, we must not think them the happier for that; these are oftentimes Victims, which God is willing to let grow fat, that he may make of them one day a more glorious Sacrifice to his Indignation. And besides, we see not all; the sensible part of the Soul is often the secret, but God knows it full well, and commonly smites the Sinner there, according to that saying of Scripture; *the fear of the wicked it shall come upon him.*

Of D E A T H.

Meditation I.

Death is uncertain, we are to make timely preparation for it.

I. **I** Know very well I shall die, but I know not when; were it to be to-morrow, I ought to prepare my self to-day;

day ; alas ! it may be sooner perhaps ; I may die within an hour, I may die the very minute I think on't : if that happened, am I ready ?

II. What hinders, but that I instantly prepare for Death ? I fear that the thought of it may make me melancholy, I am afraid it will disturb my pleasures ; but should I die without thinking on't, is that an Evil to be set light by ?

III. When all is done, it is a trouble we must soon or late put our selves to. It is impossible I can die well, unless I prepare for it, and I cannot prepare for it, without thinking thereon : That thought will disturb my Pleasures ; a weak Reason to take me off of it : If it did not disquiet them, if it did not wean me from them, what good would it do to me ?

Meditation II.

Death is a Master of great concern, it requires a great deal of care to make it happy.

I. THE most important act of Life, is to die : How do I prepare myself for it ? it is a Busines that concerns my

my Soul, my Salvation, the loss of Paradise, and Damnation to Hell Fire. Do I take all the care that so great Concerns require?

II. What care soever I take to prepare my self for Death, it is still an Affair wherein I cannot promise my self infallible Success. What measures soever may be taken, one is still in danger of miscarrying : Many have failed in it through too much Confidence that they had sufficiently laboured for a good Issue. What ought not I to fear, I, who wholly flight it ?

III. There are Affairs that may be avoided, if one will take the Pains ; there are others that may be taken up ; and by demanding less than one may pretend to, there is no danger of losing all. The Affair of Death is not of that Nature ; it's inevitable die we must ; it admits of no Capitulation ; we must run the whole risk : betwixt dying well and ill there is no Medium.

Meditation III.

Death destroys human Grandeur and Pleasures.

I. **A** Shroud, a Coffin, a Grave of five or six foot of Earth, puts an end to all the Pride and Grandeur of mortal Men. *O Earth, O Dust, what hast thou to brag of!*

II. In the Grave I shall be no more but a little Dust; out of the Grave what will remain of me upon Earth? a Name that sometimes may be remembred, by chance, for my reproach? *O Vanity!*

III. To be damned for getting an Estate which one may never enjoy, what Folly is it? To pamper Flesh which Worms shall devour, deliciously to feed a Body that is suddenly to be reducing into Ashes, what Employment is that of Man's Life?

Meditation

Meditation IV.

We are to do during our Life, what at our Death we may wish we had done.

I. **O**N E never judges better than at Death, and one is never less capable than then to act. Men judge well, because they see things thoroughly and in themselves, but they never act worse, because then the Soul is troubled, and in agitation. It is a great secret to judge of things during Life, as one would judge of them at Death; and to do them as one will wish he had done them.

II. Were I upon the brink of Death, how would I wish I had lived. There is no Action of Piety which I would not willingly have practised; no Life so austere, that I would not wish I had embraced. Have not I at present the same reasons for living well, that at that time I may have to wish I had lived well?

III. It never entred into the Thoughts of any dying Man to regret his not having been enough engaged in the World, and his not having lived deliciously enough. Men lament the time they have lost in the vain Divertisements of the Age,

Age, and their too much love for Pleasures: Alas! all my Life is nothing else, but what Men bewail at their Death.

Meditation V.

Life is frail, and of short continuance; we are not to build our hopes on it.

I. **S**OUL, said the Rich Man in the Gospel, thou hast much Goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. Inconsiderate Man! is it enough to have Goods for many years, if one have not many years to enjoy his Goods?

II. Nothing is more frail, nor less to be relied upon, than Life. A thousand Accidents may put a stop to the Course of it; a Fever, an Inflammation of the Lungs, an unlucky Blow, is enough to dispatch a Man. Health, Constitution, and Youth, resist not always Death; Men of all Ages die, and sometimes when they think themselves best in health; and yet shall I dare to build my hopes upon Life?

III. Could I live as long as it were possible for me by the ordinary Course of Nature,

Nature, could I be assured of Fifty years more of Life, is that comparable to Eternity? *Adam* lived nine hundred and thirty years, and died: *Noah* lived nine hundred and fifty years, and he is dead: Perhaps I have still twenty or thirty years to live, and I live as if I were never to die.

Meditation VI.

Men die but once, therefore it is of extreme Importance to die well.

I. If a Man were to die twice, it would be less imprudent to run the risk of dying ill once; he might make Reparation for his Fault; he might be well at his own cost; he might at the same time repent his bad Life and bad Death: But alas! when one is once dead, there is no returning again to Live; one must continue there where he is; *where the tree falls, there it shall lie.*

II. If by an unlucky Chance my Goods are destroyed, I can purchase more; if a malicious Person ruine my Fortune, a good Friend may restore it; but if a bad Death make me lose my Soul,

Soul, how is that Loss to be made up again?

III. A moment followed by Eternity, a moment on which depends Eternity, a moment that is to determine my Bliss or Misery to all Eternity, deserves it not well to be thought on as long as I live? O terrible moment, how can one forget thee!

Meditation VII.

Death is sweet to good Men, but terrible to Sinners.

I. IT's as natural for a good Life to be followed by a good Death, and for a disorderly Life to have a dismal End, as it is for a good Tree to bring forth good Fruit, and a bad Tree bad Fruit. If sometimes it happen that a great Sinner dies well, it is a kind of Miracle, on which Sinners ought to lay no greater stress for their Salvation, than Men that are desperately sick, ought upon miraculous Cures for the Recovery of their Healths.

II. Die we must: O terrible Word to a Man who hath never thought of Death!

what trouble and disorders are wrought in the Soul of a Sinner, by the confused Apprehensions that it raiseth? For then are all the Faculties employ'd to conceive the meaning of it. We must die, that's to say, we must leave Goods, House, Offices, Friends; we must for ever bid adieu to all the Pleasures of Life; we must appear before God to give an Account of our Actions, and to be judged by him. How many things to forsake? how many things to bewail? how many things to do? how many things to fear? and for all these Men have but a moment. Oh, how dismal then is the Death of a Sinner!

III. *The Souls of the Just are in the Hands of God; Death afflicts them not.* When one is not wedded to Life, he parts from it without regret; and when one considers that he only dies to live for ever, he dies with pleasure; he fears not to fall into the Hands of God, when he loves him, because when we love him, we are sure to be beloved of him. *Let my Soul die the Death of the righteous.*

Of the last Judgment.

Meditation I.

God is to be our Judge, it concerns us much to be in his favour.

I. When a Man hath a Law Sute, what does he not do to gain his Judges? He gets all his Friends to sollicite them; he waits on them early in the Morning, he omits no Submissions towards them, and renders them all sorts of Civilities. My Salvation is in the Hands of God, he is to be Judge of it; what do I to render him favourable to me.

II. A Man would be counted a Fool to slight a Judge before whom he is to have a Tryal concerning his whole Estate. The Tryal that I have before God is of other-guise importance, it concerns my eternal happiness or misery, and I affront him!

III. If after God hath condemned me, I could still appeal to another; if I could get the Sentence pronounced against me, reversed by a superiour Tribunal, I were less to be blamed: But if God declares against me, who dares to declare for me? If God condemns me, who can have right to absolve me?

Meditation II.

The day of Judgment, is the day of God's Wrath.

I. **G**OD does all things, in a manner, suitable to his Greatness; he loves like God, he rewards like God, but he punishes also like God; he pours forth his Wrath upon Sinners, as it becometh the Dignity of God. O my Soul, conceive aright what an angry God is, a God provoked against his Creatures, a God resolved to be revenged on Men! *Who can think on the day of his coming, and who dares appear in his sight?*

II. Where shall I hide my self, O Lord, from thine Eyes in the Day of thy fiery indignation? The Creatures which never disobeyed thee shall tremble; the Sun that keeps so constantly the Course thou hast appointed him from the Beginning of the World, shall be darkned, the Stars so obedient to thy Voice, shall fall from Heaven, the Sea that hath with so much respect kept within the Bounds thou hast set to it, shall quake; shall I then be secure, I, who have offended thee, and so insolently despised thy Law?

III. The

III. The more patient thou art, O my God, the more thou connivest at the Sins of Men, to give them time for Repentance; but I conceive thou wilt be the more terrible when thou hast a mind to punish them. Men despise thy Goodness, and abuse thy Mercies, and thou art silent. O how loud will thy Voice be heard, when thy Patience, tired out by our Crimes, will no longer hinder thy Wrath from breaking out upon us !

Meditation III.

The day of Judgment, is the day of Vengeance.

I. **G**O D at present makes use of Sinners for purifying the Virtue of Saints; but at the day of Judgment he will make use of Saints for punishing the Crimes of Sinners. God is a good Father he chastises his Children that they may amend, but he casts into the Fire the Rod which he uses for correcting them.

II. When I shall see God avenging himself on his Enemies, when I shall see the Saints trampling under foot the ungodly, as Dirt and Ashes; when I shall see all

the Creatures armed against the wicked, who have made them the instruments of their Sins ; then may I also be avenged on those that persecuted me : That's the time God hath appointed for Revenge ; we must not anticipate it.

III. I do my self an injury when I revenge my self in this Life upon those that do me evil : I can revenge my self but weakly, and with little Glory ; nor is it always securely done neither, and it often happens that by seeking a Revenge, one meets with a new injury. Let us wait till God put the Sword into our Hands, to execute his Wrath upon the Nations ; till he makes us the Judges of his and our Enemies ; it is my own fault if I be not one of them. He hath promised to those who shall forsake all and follow him, that they shall be of that number.

Meditation IV.

The Just Men and Sinners shall appear before God with different Thoughts.

I. **W**hen the sound of the Trumpet shall be heard, which shall summon the Dead to appear before the Tribunal

Tribunal of God, some shall hasten out of their Graves to go and meet the Redeemer in the Clouds; others shall call to Hills and Mountains to fall upon them to cover them from the sight of their Judge: Of which of the two shall I be?

II. Shall I never see *Jesus*, but to fear and hate him? Shall I never see him in his Glory, but to be afflicted at his Advantages? O my only hope in the Day of Tribulation, become not to me an Object of Terror!

III. In what posture shall the great Men of the World be, who are so jealous of their Place, in that general Assembly of all Men and Angels? They'll be treated like Slaves, without Distinction, without Honour, without Consideration; and they shall have the Sorrow to see those whom they have despised, above them. *Behold*, shall they then say in surprize and despair, *behold those whom we have mocked, Fools that we are; we thought that their Life was folly, and behold, they are of the number of the Children of God!*

Meditation V.

At the Day of Judgment God will justify the Conduct of his Servants, and of his secret Judgments.

I. THE Precipitation of my Judgments makes me commit great injustice against my Neighbour; I condemn Actions which are most laudable, because I only judge of them by outward Appearance: God who sees the inside, judges quite otherwise, and he will one day make appear to all the World, the Judgment he makes of them to my Confusion. O my Soul, let us not judge before the time!

II. Have I never committed that injustice but against Men? Have I not even past my rash Judgments upon the Conduct of God himself? Have not I made those inconsiderate Reflections, which the false Wits of the World sometimes make? How can that be? How does that agree with Providence? How shall I be ashamed, when God shall make known to all Men and Angels the weakness of my Reafonings concerning his secret Counsels?

III. With

III. With what Confidence dare I examine the Conduct of God, I, who am so ignorant about mine own? How can I condemn my Neighbour for doubtful Actions, I, who daily excuse in my self so many real Failings? If I be blind, if I be unjust, God is not so, my Judgments will not prepossess him, neither in favour to my self, nor to the Prejudice of others: *He will render to every one according to their Works.*

Meditation VI.

Of the opening of Conscience.

I. I Have no so intimate a Friend, to whom I would discover all my secret Failings, and I many times disguise them to my self; what Confusion will it be for me, when God shall punish them in the presence of all Men!

II. I am only ashamed of Men in this Life; provided I can hide my Sins from them, I care not though God see them: It will not be so at the Day of Judgment, nothing will trouble me more than to see the Eyes of my God fixt upon me: If we would avoid that Confusion, we must blot them out in this Life.

III. How many Men that only Judge of me by what they see, will be surprised when they shall read in my Conscience so many shameful Sins which I have committed, so many brutal Passions to which I have given way ? There perhaps I my self may be mistaken. I flatter my self, I make nothing of Actions, which, perhaps, are great Sins in the sight of God : And I account some things Virtues, which God shall charge upon me as Crimes.

Meditation VII.

Of the Sentence of the Judge.

I. **H**ow different wilt thou be from thy self, O Lord, in the Day of thy Fury ! At present there is nothing more easie to be appeased than thou art ; a Sigh, a Tear, a Look, disarms thine Anger, and then thou wilt be inflexible at the Cries of an infinite number of wretches, against whom thou wilt, without Pity, pronounce that so terrible Sentence ; *Go ye cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

II. When I perceive that God is provoked against me, I present to him the
Death

Death of *Jesus*; I fly to his Wounds, and there find a safe Sanctuary from the Evils wherewith he threatens me; but at the Day of Judgment it will be *Jesus* himself who shall pronounce the Sentence of my Condemnation: No body will intercede for me, I must undergo a Judgment without Mercy.

III. To see good Men honoured with the glorious Name of the Children of God, and Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven, whilst the Wicked are called accursed, and condemned to eternal Flames; to see them to mount up to Heaven, to reign there with God, whilst the other are cast headlong into Hell, there to burn eternally with Devils. *That, that, my Soul, is the Destiny of Sinners, and the end of Impiety.*

Of Paradise and Hell.

Meditation I.

What Paradise is.

I **P**aradise may be attained to, but not comprehended: Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the mind of Man to conceive the good things

things that God hath prepared for those that love him: And nevertheless I put my self daily in danger of losing it.

II. I fancy that I could make my Life very pleasant, if God would give me power to make it so as I could imagine, and nevertheless I could do nothing that can come near the Life which the Saints lead in Paradise. God hath done more for me than could have come into my Thoughts to desire.

III. Could I ever have imagined to my self a lovelier Habitation than Heaven, sweeter Company than that of Angels, a larger Possession, and more capable to content all my Desires, than the Possession of God? *Blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord, and the People whom he hath chosen for his own Inheritance.*

Meditation II.

The sight of God maketh the Happiness of the Saints in Paradise.

I. WE are now the Children of God, but when he manifests himself to us in his Glory, we shall be altogether like unto him; we shall participate of his Brightness,

Brightness, of his Knowledge and Immortality. *I said ye are Gods, and all of you the Sons of the most High.*

II. *I shall be filled, O Lord, when I shall see thee in thy Glory ; I shall have no more disquiet nor desires, because I shall stand no more in need of any thing ; I shall find all Blessings in thee alone, and I shall fully enjoy thee ; I shall be satisfied in the abundance of thy House, and quench my Thirst in those Rivers of Pleasure which thou shdest abroad in the Hearts of thy Chosen.*

III. There is no good in this Life, but what is mingled with some Evil. Honours perplex, Riches disquiet, and Pleasures ruin Health. To find Blessings in their Purity, we must go to Heaven, there one is a King without Charges, one is Rich without Affairs, one tastes Pleasures without surfeiting, and without any fear of losing them. *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts ! my Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord : My Heart and my Flesh crieth out for the living God.*

Meditation III.

The Thoughts of a Soul which desires to go to Paradise to see our Lord.

I. **O** That I had wings like a Dove, to fly to Jesus, to retreat into his Wounds, and there to be at rest! O Jesus, shall I never see thee but under a veil? Wilt thou never openly shew me that Face, the sight whereof maketh the Happiness of the Saints.

II. Paradise is not Paradise, but because there we see, and perfectly love Jesus. The most solitary Desart would be a Paradise to me, if I could there find Jesus: For whom have I in Heaven, but thee? and what do I desire upon Earth in comparison of thee? Thou art my Light, my Life, my Joy, my Love, my God, and my All.

III. The hopes of seeing Jesus one day, makes me live, and yet I am impatient to die. *Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of Death?* So long as I am here, I shall not see Jesus, I shall not enjoy Jesus, I shall not perfectly love Jesus, I shall always be in danger of offending Jesus, and of losing him. *Pluck my Soul, O Lord, out of this Prison, that it may praise thy holy Name in Sion.*

Meditation

Meditation IV,

What Hell is.

I. **A** Narrow dark Prison in the Center of the World, always burning like a fiery Furnace, but with a Fire without Light: This, my Soul, is that which is called Hell; canst thou resolve to abide there for ever?

II. To burn, to burn without dying, to burn without Relief, and without Hopes of ever seeing an end of the Punishment, is but the least part of the Torments wherewith God punishes Sinners in Hell. O living God, how terrible is it to fall into thy Hands!

III. To live with Devils amongst the damned and desperate; what kind of Society? There is no other in Hell. To weep, groan, and always to wail; what kind of Exercise? That is the eternal Employment of Hell; *for there shall be nothing but weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Meditation V.

Of what Nature are the Evils which are suffered in Hell.

I. **G**OD never pours forth all his Wrath upon Sinners in this Life : His greatest Fury falls upon them but by Drops, as it is said in Scripture, and they are never alike miserable in all things ; but in Hell it falls upon them like a Torrent which overwhelms them with all sorts of Evils, and leaves no part of their Body or Soul free from some particular Plague : *He will whet his Sword, and sharp his Arrows against them.*

II. There are no entire Sufferings in this Life : When we are Sick, we find Remedies that ease us ; when we are in Affliction, our Friends comfort us ; the most violent Evils have some intervals and intermissions, only in Hell, Pain has no abatement. The rich Glutton, since he is there, has never been able to procure a drop of Water to qualifie the heat of the Flames wherein he burns.

¶ III. Time insensibly wears out the Thoughts which afflict the Soul : Habit dulls the Sense of Pain in the Body, and there

there is no Evil neither in Body nor Soul which is not rendred supportable by the hopes of seeing an end of it. In Hell there is none of these Consolations, there the mind is always taken up with the sad and cruel Thoughts of Reprobation ; effects of it are at all times equally felt ; the Reprobate never want cause to upbraid themselves, that they might have been saved, and that it is their own Fault that they are damned ; and they know very well, that what they suffer, is to endure for ever. *The Worm that gnaws them shall not die, nor the Fire that burns them be quenched.*

Meditation VI.

Of the Privation of God.

I. **T**H E damned shall never see thee, O Lord; they shall never enjoy thee. O how true is it, that Hell is a state of Death ; because there thou who art Life, art not enjoyed ! O how true is it, that it is a Place of everlasting Horror ! since there thou never appearest, thou who art the Son of Righteousness !

O

O Jesus, my Life, and my Light, suffer me not for ever to be seperated from thee!

II. Yet, Lord, if one loved thee there; if one praised thy holy Name there; if what one suffers there, were acceptable unto thee; if thou tookest pity on it, something might be said: But alas! The damned will there hate thee to eternity, blaspheme thee eternally, have thee eternally for an Enemy, and be eternally thine. How terrible would that Pain appear to thee, O my Soul, if thou didst love God well?

III. Men are not miserable so long as they suffer with Submission to thy Will, O my God. The Martyrs have demonstrated to us, That an Heart that loveth thee, may retain Peace and Joy upon the Rack, and in the Flames. But in Hell, where the damned love thee not; in Hell, where they look upon thee as an Enemy, what ease can they expect to their Pains? Thus is it with them, O my Soul, who forsake the living God.

Meditation VII.

It is extream Folly to believe that there is a Paradise and a Hell, and to live as if there were none.

I. **T**here is a Paradise and a Hell, I believe it, and I cannot doubt of it, without a voluntary Blindness. But if I believed nothing of it, were I convinced, that all that I am told concerning it, were but Fables, could I think of it seldomer than I do? Could I commit more Sins? Could I do fewer good Works? Though I had some ground to doubt of it, yet it would be the height of Imprudence in me to expose my self, by so doubting, to the loss of the greatest of Blessings, and to the incurring the greatest of Evils, for the Enjoyment of a Life whose Pleasures last so short a while.

II. I find what deceives me; I flatter my self, that it will be easie for me, when I would, to leave the broad way of Hell, and follow that of Paradise. I promise to my self, that one day I shall repent, but how do I know that I shall have time? Shall not my Life end before I would have it? God hath numbered my Days; who knows but the first Hour I shall spend in Sin, may be the last of my Life? Shall I be the first that hath been surprized? So many People both Younger, and more healthful than I, have been snatch'd away by sudden Death; I may die as they have done. Jesus Christ hath said, that he will come as a Thief in the Night, when he is not expected. I never mind that less than when I Sin. I ought then to be afraid

afraid, least he surprize me in the very act of
Sin.

III. If to Day I will not abstain from Sin because I find pleasure in it, would I be willing to abstain from it Ten Years hence? Will Sin be then without Pleasure? Or shall I have less Sense of Pleasure than now I have? Experience hath sufficiently taught me already, that the Enjoyment of Pleasures rather kindles than extinguishes the desire of them. As there are Pleasures for all Pallats, so there are for all Ages; Men improve them daily, and daily invent new ones. If I have a mind to Sin at present, that I may taste the Pleasures in vogue, I will have the same mind Ten Years hence, that I may taste those that will then be in Fashion. When we look upon our Conversion in the future, nothing appears so easie to be done, because we consider it as stript of all that may render it difficult: But when that future is become present, we well preceive, that we have been deceived, we find violent and extravagant Passions to be subdued, long Habits that are to be destroyed; we stand in need of extraordinary Grace to succeed in that; and extraordinary Grace is not so easily given. God leaves off to call, when Men refuse to hear: If then he lets us to Day hear his Voice, let us not harden our Hearts; he hath too long invited us to follow him. Seeing we conceive there is a necessity of doing it, to what end should we delay? Perhaps it will be too late To Morrow; let us therefore begin To Day: *dixi, nunc cœpi.*

The End.

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P R A Y E R S

For every

Morning and Evening

Throughout

The W E E K.

A Prayer for Sunday Morning.

O Most merciful God and Creator, who hath purer Eyes than to behold iniquity ; how shall I abominable Wretch dare to appear before thee, who am nothing but Pollution ? I am defiled in my very Nature, having a backwardness to all Good, and a readiness to all Evil ; but I have defiled my self yet much worse by my own Sins and Wick- ed customs : I have transgres'd my duty to thee, my Neighbour, and my self, and that both in Thought, in Word

G

and

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and in Deed ; by doing those things which thou hast expressly forbidden, and by neglecting to do those things thou hast commanded me ; and this not only through Ignorance and Frailty, but Knowingly and Wilfully, against the motions of thy Spirit, and the checks of my own Conscience to the contrary. And to make all these out of measure sinful, I have gone on in a Daily course of repeating these provocations against thee , notwithstanding all thy Calls and my own Purposes and Vcws of amendment. Yea, this very Day I have not ceased to add new Sins to all my former Guilts, [Here name the particulars.] And now, O Lord, what shall I say, or how shall I open my Mouth seeing I have done those things ; I know that the wages of those Sins are Death : But O thou that willest not the Death of a Sinner, have mercy upon me ; Work in me I beseech thee a sincere contrition and perfect hatred of my Sins, and let me not Daily confess, and as Daily renew them ; but grant, O Lord, from this Minute I may give a Bill of Divorce to all my most Beloved Lusts, and then be thou pleased to espouse me

A Prayer for Sunday Morning. 123

me to thy Truth, Righteousness and Holiness : And for all my past Sins, O Lord, receive a Reconciliation ; accept of that Ransom thy Blessed Son hath payed for me, and for his sake whom thou hast set forth for a Propitiation , Pardon all my offences, and receive me to thy favour. And when thou hast thus spoken peace to my Soul, Lord, keep me that I turn not any more to folly, but establish me with thy Grace, that no temptation of the World, nor the device of my own Flesh may ever draw me to offend thee ; that being made free from Sin, and becoming a Servant unto God, I may have my Fruit unto Holiness, and the end everlasting Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For Sunday Night.

O Gracious God whose mercy endures for ever, I thy unworthy Servant who hath so deeply tasted of them, desire to render thee the tribute of my humblest, praises for them. In thee, O Lord, I live, and move, and have my being: Thou first madest me to be, and then that I might not be miserable, but happy, thou delivers thy Son out of thy Bosom, to deliver me from the power of my Sins by his Grace, and from the punishment of them by his Blood; and by both to bring me to his Glory. Thou hast by thy Mercy caused me to be Born within thy Peculiar fold the Christian Church, where I was early consecrated to thee in Baptism; and I have been partaker of all those Spiritual helps, which might aid me to perform that Vow I there made to thee; and when by my own willfulness or negligence I have failed to do it, yet thou in thy manifold Mercies hath not forsaken me, but hath graciously invited me to Repentance, afforded me all means

means both outward and inward for it, and with much patience hath attended; and not cut me off in the Acts of those Damning Sins I have committed, as I have most justly deserved. It is, O Lord, thy restraining Grace alone by which I have been kept back from any of the greatest Sins, and it is thy inciting and assisting Grace alone by which I have been enabled to do any the least good; therefore not unto me, but unto thy Name be the Praises. For these and all other Spiritual Blessings my Soul doth magnify the Lord, and all that is within me praise his Holy Name. I likewise praise thee for all those outward Blessings I enjoy, as Health, Friends, Food and Rayment, the comfort as well as necessaries of this Life, for those continual Protections of thy Hand by which I and mine are kept from dangers, and those gracious deliverances thou hast afforded out of such as have befallen me; and for that mercy of thine whereby thou hast sweetned and allayed those troubles thou hast not seen fit wholly to remove; for thy particular preservation of me this Night and all other thy goodness towards me; Lord grant that I may render thee, not only the fruit of my Lips, but the obedience.

ence of my Life, that so the Blessings here may be an earnest of those richer Blessings thou hast prepared for those that Love thee; and that for his sake whom thou hast made the Author of eternal Salvation to all that obey him, even *Jesus Christ*, &c.

A Prayer for Monday Morning

O Most Heavenly Father, we prostrate our selves before thy glorious Majesty ; and we heartily acknowledge thy Sovereign dominion over us ; we laud and magnify thy Eternal Power, Wisdom, Goodness and Truth ; and we render our most unfeigned thanks for the innumerable benefits which thou in thy mercy hath confer'd upon us : Above all for thy gracious Declaration thou hast made of thy good Will to us in *Christ Jesus*, by whom thou hast invited and encouraged Sinners to return to thee, and direct them in the way to everlasting Bliss. We Blush to think of our shameful forgetfulness of thee, and ingratitude

A Prayer for Monday Morning. 127

ingratitude to thee, to whom we owe all that we have in this World, and all our hopes in the next. We most humbly implore thy tender mercies in the forgiveness of all our Sins, whereby we have offended in Thought, Word and Deed, against thy Just and Holy Laws: For we are truly sorry for all our misdoings; we utterly renounce whatsoever is contrary to thy Will, and here devote our selves entirely to the obedience thereof. Accept, O most gracious God, of this renewed Vow, and as thou dost inspire us with Holy resolutions, so accompany them always with the assistance of thy Grace. We will endeavour, O Lord, to preserve a grateful sense of thy mighty Love in our Mind, and to follow the Doctrine and Example of thy Son *Jesus Christ*, as becomes those who have such a Blessed hope, and look for such great Salvation at the Day of his Glorious appearing. We desire above all things to be so Pure and Undefiled, so Meek and Gentle, so Humble and Lowly, so Just and Merciful, so Peaceable and Patient, Contented and Thankful, as our Blessed Lord and Master was; and we hope thou wilt ful-

128 *A Prayer for Monday Morning.*

fil all the gracious promises he hath made to us. They are the Support, the the Comfort, the Satisfaction of our Hearts. Thou hast mercifully kept us the last Night, Blessed be thy continued Goodness, and raised us again to see the Light of this Morning. Receive us likewise all this Day into thy Protection, to which we most humbly commit our selves; and we desire, thou knowest, the good of Mankind, as well as our own, especially of all Christian People; that they may all Walk worthy of the Gospel, and live in Unity and Godly Love: To which we pray, that all Christian Kings, Princes and Governors, may be Wise, Pious, Just and Merciful, and that all his Ministers of State and Officers of Justice, may conscientiously discharge the duty reposed in them, seeking in their several places how to right the Oppressed, comfort the Afflicted, to provide for the Poor and Needy, and to Relieve all those that are in any Miserie. Bless our Clergy, succeed their Labours, and give us Grace to follow their Godly Admonitions: The same Blessing we crave for all Friends, Relations and Acquaintance, that we may Live

A Prayer for Monday Morning. 129

Live in perfect Peace and Unity together ; doing our Duty to thee, and each other, that we may give comfortable account of our selves, and rejoice together at the Great Day of our Lord *Jesus* ; in whose Holy Words we beseech thee to help us still more heartily to offer up our desires to thee, *Our Father*, &c.

For Monday Night.

Most merciful Father and Almighty Creator, by whom we were made, and in whom we live, move, and have our being ; to whose tender Compassion we owe our safety the Day past, together with all the present comforts of this Life, and the hopes of that which is to come. We Praise and Laud thee, O Lord, the Creator and Governor of the World : We ascribe all Greatness, Might, Majesty, Wisdom, Riches and Bounty to thee : We bow our selves likewise before thee, and we have nothing but what we receive from thee.

Blessed be thy Great Goodnes for the long Health, which by thy favour we have enjoyed ; for our Food and our Rayment, for our Peace and Safety, for the Society of our Friends, and the Love of our Neighbours, for the success thou hast given to our honest Labours after the things of this Life : We can never Bless thee enough for that wonderful Grace which put *Jesus Christ* to reveal that eternal Life to us, and to direct us in the way that leads unto it. We thank thee with all our Souls, that we feel in our Hearts any motion towards thee. Behold, O Lord, we present our selves here before thee to be inspired with such a vigorous and full fense of thy Love, as may move us more powerfully towards thee : We hope thou wilt never leave us, nor forsake us ; but conduct us safe through all Varieties and Changes of our condition here, in an unchangeable Love to thee, and in an holy Composure and Tranquility of Mind in thy Love to us, till we come to Live with thee, and enjoy thee for ever. And now that we are going to lay our selves down to Rest, take us into thy gracious Protection, and settle our Spirits in such quiet and

and delightful thoughts of the Glory where our Lord *Jesus* Lives, that we may be willing to leave this World, and to go to him *who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we shall live together with him.* To his Blessing we commend all Mankind, of whatsoever rank and condition they be, that they may all be so happy as to do their several Duties carefully, and to enjoy contentedly whatever is needful for them. We leave all we have with thee, especially our Friends and those who are dear unto us; desiring that when we are Dead, they may lift up their Souls in this manner unto thee, and teach those that come after to praise, love and obey thee; and that if we awake again in the Morning, our Mouths may likewise praise thee again with joyful Lips, and we may still offer our selves a more acceptable Sacrifice to thee, through *Jesus Christ*, in whose Words we beseech thee to hear us, &c.

A Prayer for Tuesday Morning.

Most gracious God, and merciful Father, who of thy goodness hast preserved me from the Perils of this Night, and safely brought me to the beginning of this Day ; preserve me in the same, I humbly beseech thee, from all Sin and Danger, possess my Mind with a continual fence of thy presence, and so Direct, Sanctifie and Govern my Soul and Body in the Ways of thy Laws, and the Works of thy Commandments, that through thy most gracious Protection, I may be preserved from all Evil, both this Day, and for ever, through Jesus Christ my dear Redeemer, &c.

For

For Tuesday Night.

O Omnipotent maker, who dwelt in that Light, which no mortal Eye can approach, and by whose providence all things were made and govern'd, look down in mercy upon me thy unworthy Creature here prostrate before thee; pardon all my Sins, and let the light of thy Countenance so shine upon me, that neither the Prince of Darkness may have any Power over me, nor the Works of Darkness overwhelm me; but that by thy mighty Protection I may be defended both in Body and Soul, from all the Perils and Dangers of this Night, through Jesus Christ my dear Redeemer.

A Prayer for Wednesday Morning.

O Holy Lord God, I Weep and Bewail the Corruption of my Nature, my aversion to good, and inclination to all Evil: O do thou mortify my Lusts, and quicken those Seeds of Virtue which thy Holy Spirit hath Planted in me. Create in me a thankful Heart, make me truly sensible of my Obligation to thee, and let me express my thankfulness to thee, by an entire obedience to all thy Laws. Enable me to resign my self up wholly to thy disposal, and to serve thee with all the powers of my Soul and Body, that after this painful Life ended, I may enjoy everlasting Bliss and Felicity by the intercession of my only Saviour and Redeemer, who in compassion to our Infirmities, hath taught us when we pray, to say, *Our Father, &c.*

For Wednesday Night.

O Most Great and Glorious God, I beseech thee give thy Angels charge over me, to keep me in all thy ways, that no Evil happen unto me, nor any Plague surround my dwelling. Bless and Prosper, I humbly beseech, all my Relations, Friends and Acquaintance; grant me a moderate and refreshing Sleep, such as may fit me for Duties of the Day following; make me always mindful of my latter End, that when I expire, I may peaceably resign my Soul into the Hands of my dear Redeemer, to whom be Honour, Power and Glory, &c.

A Prayer for Thursday Morning.

O Thou most dreadful Majesty of Heaven and Earth, who perfectly hateth all Iniquity, and will not be reconciled to any impenitent Sinner, how shall I a miserable polluted Wretch, dare to look upon thee: I confess, O Lord, I am a most grevious and abominable Sinner, and do altogether deserve thy Wrath and Indignation: And now, O God, what can I say for my self, I have nothing to plead in my own excuse; I have nothing to fly unto, but that mercy I have too long abused; my Conscience condemns me, my Sins cry loud against me: Wherefore for *Jesus Christ* his sake, have mercy upon me, heal my Soul, for I have Sinned against thee. I desire, O Lord, to return unto thee, and grant that I may Love the thing which thou Commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so among the sundry and manifold changes of the World, my Heart may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

For Thursday Night.

O Most gracious God, I Bleſſ and Praife thy Name, for all thy mer- cies thou continually heaps upon me, par- ticularly for thoſe which I have received from thee. Pardon I beſeech thee all the Sins and negligences of which I have been at any time guilty, let not them hinder the continuance of thy mercy and favour towards me, on which all the comforts of my Life depend. I com- mend my ſelf to thy gracious Protection, Guidance and Bleſſing this Night and ever, beſeeching thee to ſave and defend me Sleeping and Waking, that reſting in thy peace, Living in thy fear, and Dying in thy favour, I may be raifed by thy Power unto everlasting Life, thro' *Jesus Christ* my Saviour, &c.

A Prayer for Friday Morning.

O Most Blessed God, I adore and humbly Worship thee, I acknowledgs my dependance on thee, by thee I Live and Move, and to thy Bounty I owe all the good things I enjoy ; I thank thee for preserving me this Night, and for raifing me up to the Light of another Day ; keep me in the same from all Sin and Danger, and so direct me in thy Ways, that thy Word being my Rule, thy Grace my guide and assistance, thy Goodness, my Pattern and Example, thy Joys may be my everlasting Recompence and Reward, thro' the Merits of *Jesus Christ* my Saviour, &c.

For Friday Night.

O Most gracious God, as thou hast preserved me hitherto this Day, so Bless me, I beseech thee, the remaining part of it, that endeavouring sincerely in all my Designs, Words, De-
fires and Actions, to approve my self to thee, as thy Good and Faithful Servant, I may with a good Conscience present my self before thee in the conclusion of it; and with the greater confidence of thy gracious acceptance, renew my Prai-
ses, and commend my self to thy Blessing, and I hope for thy continued Protection, thro' Christ Jesus, &c.

A Prayer for Saturday Morning.

O Thou ever Blessed Majesty, who knowest the Infirmities of my Nature, and among how many Dangers I live, being continually Subject to the deceits of the World, the Flesh and the Devil ; grant me the assistance of thy powerful Grace, and enable me to resist and overcome all temptations to Sin, from the Snares of the World, the corruptions of my Nature, the Acts and Designs of the Devil, from the mischief of evil Counsel, the infection of bad example, a great Danger and invincible Temptation, good Lord deliver me. Let every mercy have its due effect upon me, every opportunity of Repentance make me better ; and if a Temptation prove too hard for me, let me not Sleep with an unrepented Sin in my Bosom, but give me a Penitent Heart, a watchful and upright Conscience ; let thy goodness be my Pattern, and make me useful in the station thou hast placed me ; give me a Heart and Wisdom to do good. O Omnipotent God, to whom every thing is possible ; Sanctify my corrupt Nature.

For Saturday Morning 141

Nature, and let thy gracious aids supply all my defects, and help my infirmities, that I may Live in thy Love and Fear, Die in thy Favour, and be prepared for the great account I am to give, and be rewarded with thy faithful Servants to the joy of thy rest.

For Saturday Night.

O Most glorious God, the Fountain of all Goodness and all Grace, from whom Angels and Men and all Creatures have received all the good they have in them : I acknowledge the infinite obligations thou hast lay'd upon all to Love and Serve thee : But with shame I must confess I have not Lov'd, nor Serv'd thee as I ought, nay, I have dishonoured and offended thee as I ought not, in my Thoughts, in my Words, in my Actions, by all the senses of my Body, and all the Powers of my Soul, I have broken thy righteous Laws ; and as a greater Addition, I have gone on in a Daily course of repeating those Provocations against thee, notwithstanding all thy Calls and my own Vows of amendment. And now, O Lord, what shall I do, or whether shall I fly ? How can

can I hope for mercy, that have deserved the Rigour of thy Justice? Receive me, O merciful Father, and be reconciled unto me in the Mercies and Merits of thy dear Son: For his sake restore me again to thy Grace and Favour. Let my Mind be ever possess'd with a powerful sense of thee, and an Ardent Love to thee, and an Holy care to please and obey thee. And least Ingratitude for former favours receiv'd should stop thy Current of future Blessings; I humbly return thee my most unfeigned thanks, for all thy Goodness and Loving kindness from time to time bestowed on me; in these Holy Thoughts and Desires, I recommend my self to thy gracious Protection this Night. O let me find them fresh and lively in my Soul, when I awake in the Morning, as to dispose and fit me for the Duties of thy Worship and Service: And the same mercies which I beg for my self, I desire for the rest of Mankind, that they carefully live and obey thee, and by the intercession of *Jesus Christ* our dear Redeemer enjoy everlasting Joy and Felicity in the World to come, to whom be all Praise, Honour and Glory, &c.

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